



Universidad Autónoma de Madrid  
Facultad de Filosofía y Letras  
Departamento de Filología Inglesa

TESIS DOCTORAL

HIDDEN QUANTUM OF SOLACE:  
*Narratio* of Violence and *Petitio* of Solace  
in the Plays of Sarah Kane

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Dirigida por la Dra. Eulalia Piñero Gil

MADRID, 2015





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Tesis presentada por Dña. María Mercedes Herrer Mediavilla,  
Licenciada en Filología Inglesa para la obtención del grado de Doctor.

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... *toi qui m'as consolé.*

Gérard de Nerval



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# **I. SALUTATIO**







## 1.1 Introduction



My first contact with Sarah Kane's authentic texts was opening an envelope at Bristol University, where the original of the *Unpublished Monologues* are held (at the T.I.C).



The following doctoral thesis is based on the English playwright Sarah Kane. It will focus on the process of violence through victims and perpetrators present in all her plays, and the liberation, consolation or solace by means of words, of poetical words in all her theatre, mainly in her two last plays, *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis*. My intention is to show that in her plays there are a combination of violence and verbalized despair with a poetic style in order to accomplish *quantum* of solace. This consolation or solace by means of her plays is a kind of poetic religious answer. This religious answer is not in the orthodox way but in a redemptory way looking for redeeming qualities. However, it does not mean that Kane's theatre offers solutions or redemptions or even solace. What she offers is the most brutalised moments turned into the most human by means of her poetic discourse on stage and other theatrical effects. These brutalised moments turned into the most human by means of her poetic words are hidden *quantum* of solace. Consequently, with *quantum* of solace a total oblivion must come after an atrocious suffering to provoke a change, a new state as the voice in *4.48 Psychosis* says:

Watch the stars  
predict the past  
and change the world with a silver eclipse.

(240)

This thesis will also focus on a rainbow of analyses on Kane and my own experience following her steps.

Plays are often exclusively studied in their written form and it is easy to neglect their performative dimension and performance history. In this manner, the theatre as the "seeing place," not only provides a space for representing the world and its inhabitants, as suggested by the concept of *theatrum mundi*, but drama in general serves as a most effective vehicle for a critical reflection of human conditions, the dissemination of knowledge, and communication of values: drawing both on visual and verbal communication, its language is immediate (performances or rather theatrical events are happening "here and now") and easily accessible for the educated and common man. Furthermore, drama can be performed anywhere at any time: all that is needed for a play to come into being are actors, an audience, and any space that can be used for performance, be it a marketplace, a street, a wagon, or an actual theatre.

Drama is a highly political and intertextual genre: it not only presents characters that interact with society and struggle with norms and values of the time, but often alludes to discourses of gender, ethnicity, identity, and so forth. Thus, when Kane's first play *Blasted* was performed at the London Royal Court in 1995, it was labelled by the *Daily Mail* (Tinker 1995) as "a feast of filth," because of the scenes of masturbation, fellatio, frottage, micturition, defecation, rape, homosexual rape, eye gouging and cannibalism. However, what Kane wanted to provoke were new forms of dramatic representations providing specific secular ways of experiencing the latencies and the epistemological blindness of political institutionalization. Therefore, in this thesis, I will intend to be faithful to Kane, to answer to the question raised by her opposition to dramatic academic studies and institutionalization, in the sense that they often become a catalogue, an inventory, a list in the history of British dramatic literature which forgets the visual dimension of theatre.

As a result, this thesis is a resolutely personal cognition, after having watched all Kane's plays more than once, rather than an attempt to be a collection, a classification referred to the history of British drama. It is knowledge of Kane, primarily directed at the audience, who wants to gain an overview of the cultural and social power of British drama from Kane's perspective. Secondly, it is directed at the readers, because the original circumstances and the socio-political conditions in which the plays were written are crucial components of any play and indispensable for their comprehension. As Styan notes,

[a] play lives in its ability to create something of an electric circuit between the actor and his audience, and this interchange also reflects the relationship of the theatre and society, between the implicit role of the stage and the community that nourishes it. It follows as the night the day that the merits of a play may not be fully understood without a sense of how it worked, or failed to work, when it was under the conditions for which it was written. (1996: xiii)

Besides, any doctoral thesis is based on a theoretical corpus and rather than proposing a new canon of dramatic literature researches, I will show, in this thesis, that Kane made a sizeable contribution to the British dramatic history but, as I have previously said, I will try to be loyal to her and her own wishes about not neglecting the performative dimension and performance history of plays.

The title : "HIDDEN QUANTUM OF SOLACE" refers to the Latin "*Quantum solatii*" (meaning: an amount of consolation or quantisation of solace) and is the search for *homo ludens* after a deep analysis of Kane's plays, taking into account the psychological and transpersonal points of view because Kane is constantly present in her literary works. There is scantily separation between what she has experienced and what she tries to express. However, although she can be considered as a neoromantic, because of the quality of constant subjectivity in her plays, at the same time, it is very important to see the continuous reference to the outside world in her plays. Therefore, these plays are not purely subjectivity and they constitute a work of art. Besides, we do not know many aspects of her biography, mainly because she led her life almost in total absence of traces.

Kane as an author of plays (such as *Blasted*, *Cleansed* and *Phaedra's Love*) that scandalized reviewers and audiences alike with their gruesome depictions of rape, mutilation, cannibalism, war, and other forms of human degradation did not, apparently, conceive of her work in terms of despair only. What is more she uses St. Paul's theological virtues (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians) to characterize her work in terms of "hope" (*Blasted*), faith (*Phaedra's Love*), and love (*Crave*). Thus, her work can be understood in terms of semi-private religious issues: her realization that the force, which should have acted of her eternal protection that the force of salvation, which had sustained her throughout a youth of religious zeal- namely, God – did not exist. The resulting "split" in her personality and intellect between two kinds of consciousness – one of a very final mortality and the other of an expected salvation beyond death – works its way throughout her plays in the form of a relatively dark and ironic, but also comic, reflection on the theological concepts, such as hope and solace. Therefore, although the content of her plays is pure violence, internal and external violence contradictorily a kind of solace appears in them, as I will try to show with this research.

The title also means an analysis of Kane's plays under the antonyms of the word solace: distress, torment, torture and the meaning in itself of solace: comfort, consolation, which is the hidden "*quantum*" or amount by means of the poetry in her plays.

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<sup>1</sup> The word "*quantum*" comes from the Latin "*quantus*" for "how much". In physics, a *quantum* is the minimum amount of any physical entity involved in an interaction. This means that the magnitude can take only certain discrete values at the infinitesimal level. For example, a photon is as single *quantum* of light, and it is referred to as a "light *quantum*". The English term "solace" whose first known use was in 13<sup>th</sup> century from the old French "solas" from the Latin "*solatium*" and it means a source of comfort, consolation and it has as antonymous distress, torment, torture...

Furthermore, as it is impossible to avoid the fact that Kane committed suicide, I have also decided to write a consolation thesis. She did not like the academic as based on something already done or discovered; she only craved for invention even on invention already done. Thus, considering the *consolatio*<sup>2</sup> as a literary genre, I decided to adopt *consolatio* as the art of mourning and write this research.

Following her own desires on invention, the structure of this thesis is based on what Alberic<sup>3</sup> wrote in the 11th century about the parts that form a letter:

*SALUTATIO*

*CAPTATIO BENEVOLENTIAE*

*NARRATIO*

*PETITIO*

*CONCLUSIO*

These parts were written in the monastery of Mount Cassino<sup>4</sup> in Italy, one of the cruellest landscapes of the Second World War.

These are the ruins of Mount Cassino:

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<sup>2</sup> The *Consolatio* literary tradition ("consolation" in English) is a broad literary genre encompassing various forms of consolatory speeches, essays, poems, and personal letters. Although several ancient writings contain elements of the *Consolatio Tradition*, it was Crantor of Soli (c. 325- c. 275BC), who first constructed his works in a distinct *Consolatio Tradition*. Then authors believed language could be used as solace and consolation in times of grief.

<sup>3</sup> In Breviarion de Dictamine. *Revista Litoral. Cartas y Caligrafía*. Number 248. Ed Revista Litoral, S.A. Directed by Lorenzo Saval. Málaga 2009. pp. 12.

<sup>4</sup> The Battle of Monte Cassino (also known as the Battle for Rome and the Battle for Cassino) was a costly series of four battles during World War II, fought by the Allies against Germans and Italians with the intention of breaking through the Winter line and seizing Rome. On 15 February, the monastery, high on a peak overlooking the town of Cassino, was destroyed by 1,400 tons of bombs dropped by American bombers. It is certain from every investigation that followed since the event that the only people killed in the monastery by the bombing were Italian civilians seeking refuge in the abbey. There is no evidence that the bombs dropped on the Monte Cassino monastery that day ever killed any German troops.



If I have adopted the form of a letter to do this "*ars dictaminis*" about Kane, it is due to the fact that Kane, in her plays, faces her personal experience and her conscience. This was and is done when a personal letter (not an email or other forms in the internet) was and is written to an addressee, who plays the role of a "perverse voyeur" of the correspondence in some cases, and an "amoureux receiver" in other cases. In addition, letters allow the explanation of the feelings in an immediate form, to catch all the hues or aspects and open the ways of introspection. In a word, to create an effect of reality or credibility. In this sense, Erasmus of Rotterdam established four types of letter<sup>5</sup>:

Reflective

Demonstrative (emotional, expressive)

Legal

Familiar (domestic, intimate)

This thesis is an emotional expressive intimate letter but follows the scientific rule of an essay: to prove something, to show something because an essay is above all a long opinion on a topic. Thus, my topic is the writer Sarah Kane, using the format of a medieval letter, (now letters in extinction). The reason for adopting the letter format for a thesis is the search of solace for her and for us. Several parts of this letter contain objective and subjective studies on her. In the subjective part to take out pain to find solace. In the objective part to

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<sup>5</sup> Revista Litoral. Number 248. Ed Revista Litoral, S.A. Directed by Lorenzo Saval, Málaga 2009, pp. 79.



produce the format for the thesis. Therefore, in the search of solace for her and for us, I chose a letter format for this thesis:

Las cartas alimentan el alma, la rectifican, la consuelan.

Voltaire<sup>6</sup>

My objective is to show a creative analytical production of what I have learned from Kane and on what I have investigated. My dissecting mode may be traced by focusing on the construction of Kane's cultural image, which is "revolutionist" (a less common word for a revolutionary). This term, (which is the title of one short story written by Ernest Hemingway), could be given to those who achieve significance only within their isolated and individual disciplines.<sup>7</sup>

The following parts are a relevant, historical and social context to set the work of Kane and to understand her theatre including her opinions, plus her biography and all her works. The central theme will be shown in the parts named "*Narratio* and *Petitio*."

In this research, I have used pictures (taken from the performances when allowed). because this is a dissertation on theatre, and my intention is to show bodies and voices on scene. Thus, it is a visual verbal research and a kind of verbal patchwork in order to achieve the visual effect as it happens on stage.<sup>8</sup>

In each part, I have carried different studies on Kane's work. Thus, in the *Salutatio* I have explained the title, the format for this thesis. In the *Captatio Benevolentiae*, I show a journal and journey texts as a kind of personal diary following Kane's steps, which have been published (they appear in the *Post Datum* of this thesis). In the *Narratio*, I include Kane's biographical notes. These biographical aspects show her mordant wit and fierce courage to create a theatre of great moments of beauty and cruelty. Then, an explanation of all her plays. Furthermore, I will provide a description of Margaret Thatcher's society, because of its importance as a total rupture with previous regimes and her influence in theatre. At the same

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<sup>6</sup> Revista Litoral. Number 248. Ed Revista Litoral, S.A. Directed by Lorenzo Saval, Málaga, 2009, page 79.

<sup>7</sup> This vision was given by several professors such as Esteban Pujals and Manuel Aguirre in their analysis of the short story "The Revolutionist" by Hemingway in a Liminality Seminary at UAM, February 2000.

<sup>8</sup> In the sense of a rainbow of ideas with different linguistic leading threads, with the intention of giving the sense of bipolar disorder that Kane suffered and in honour to her and the creativity she always demanded even in academic studies at university. Besides this research is on theatre and we cannot forget the visual aspect on stage.

time, I have included the response of the Left for this new idea of theatre imposed by the neoliberal party, besides some conclusions about the Legacy of Thatcher's theatre. I have analysed Kane's place within the British Theatre of the mid 1990s and the concerns that she shared with other young writers of her generation.

Likewise, I include the label "in-her-face theatre." Thus, Kane's signs of violence are linguistically too in the "in-her-face" oeuvre, it is said her audiences, so often mirroring the characters in her plays by means of drug taking, sexual frankness and the poetics of obscenity. Kane relies on the tragic impulse to create truth out of pain but showing only the effects of pain. Besides the liberator nature in her theatre is achieved by means of inflicting pain and afterwards struggling against it. Thus, it represents the liberator nature in her theatre.

The following section of the *Narratio* is called -Pure *Narratio*-. This part is devoted entirely to discuss the topic violence in Kane. It is achieved by means of different interpretations of the violence in her plays, beginning with the linkages among violence, sexuality and power. In addition, I show torture in Kane's theatre by means of mutilations, sexual aggression, suicide and anthropophagia. Another section about perpetrators, as a leading aspect on her plays. Then, about victims and victimizers, because the time of victims is emerging as never before. Taking into consideration that though the victims wear written the pain all their life and the perpetrators consider them always guilty, it is only by means of enough solace, when the recovering of a victim may be achieved. Besides, after a suffering a total oblivion must come. Furthermore, I include a study on the importance of the issue of rape in her plays. The aspect called "Dismembering the body" is also very important in the study of violence. However, at the same time of this external violence, I have considered to devote one chapter to internal violence, because we live in a time of pure anxiety and crave present in Kane's plays. The following aspect is a study of trauma. My intention has been to understand and show how to understand this phenomenon, because in less than twenty years the notion of psychological trauma has imposed itself on society in such a way as to become the central reality of violence.

In the next part entitled *Petitio*, I analyse how the topic of violence in Kane's plays is asking for a hidden amount of solace by means of poetry, as it is mainly present in her last two plays. These last two plays, *4.48 Psychosis* and *Crave*, which form the part called "*Terrae incognitae* through different voices," were the central study of my research study previous to the doctoral thesis. I have used this part in order to show my idea of solace by means of the poetic language.

*Crave* will be analysed under the heading: "Unfamiliar Community of Speakers" by means of a table. This table will discover the central topic of this chapter, as it is an exploration of the dramatic language through different discourses:

- 1- An anti-home discourse.
- 2- A discourse of love.
- 3- The architecture of discourse.

In the first section: "An anti-home discourse," I will try to explain how the discourse of *Crave* searches for a new spatiality by means of showing a transmutation of place. In this new spatiality the dislocations, which are going to appear, range from the micro to the macro spatial in order to show dramatically the disintegration of a human mind. This disintegration appears in various orders of location under the pressure of love, loss and desire in an unnamed city and in a non-specific place.

In the second section: "A discourse of love," I will analyse how *Crave* is a dramatic love poem. Kane shows the correspondence between the two elements in a relationship: a strong desire followed by obsession, corruption, ownership and breakdown, as a consequence of this strong desire and thus, impeding the satisfactory working of this relationship. She also examines how love embodies two constant struggles, as they are the loss of control and the desperate need to obtain control. Furthermore, the constant melancholy below the surface of love is shown by Kane, because as its title suggests, "*Crave*" means a demand for forgiveness. In this sense, the discourse of love is examined without a corrosive sentimentality becoming a kind of mystical reading and above all a mystical performance.

In the third section: "The architecture of discourse," I will focus my analysis on how Kane experiments with form and language in order to present a link between drama and poetry in the field of the prose poem. With *Crave*, Kane brings into action language like music, because the language she uses is lyrical and, music and rhythm and orchestration, are as vital as content to understand the play. The discourse architecture of this play is complex. It is expressed through recurrent repetition and wasteland imagery in its figures of nihilism, of degeneration and despair. Therefore, we will also see the decorum of this architecture of discourse through an analysis of poetic qualities and intertextuality. Then, I will focus my analysis on Kane's theatre lang-scape<sup>9</sup> focusing on her prose-poem 4.48 *Psychosis*. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a vision of Kane's last work exploring language through

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<sup>9</sup> This term is suggested by Jane Palatini Bowers in her study "*They Watch Me as They Watch This*": *Gertrude Stein's Metadramas* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), and it will be used in the analysis of 4.48 *Psychosis*.

two dimensions: language in a theatre landscape and language as prose poem. Again this part will also start with an explanation of the chosen title "*Terra incognita* under an annihilating light surrounded words: *4.48 Psychosis*" by means of a table.

In my conclusion for this section, I highlight the importance of Kane's dramatic language previously analysed, in order to open further venues for a future research on this author and on contemporary British theatre.

Due to the importance that Kane gives in her plays to the interaction between audience/performance/character/stage languages, the approach I will follow in this part will be mainly hermeneutic and phenomenological.

The last part of the letter format for this research is - *Conclusio* -, where I bring together all shades of this rainbow patchwork thesis on Kane.

Conforming to the regulations of the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid regarding Ph.D theses, I include the introduction and conclusions of the present thesis in Spanish after my Conclusions.

The part named *Post Scriptum* includes Bibliography.

The *Post Datum* has *Addenda* that includes three parts. The first one is called *Captatio Benevolentiae* and contains the texts published in *La Opinión* de Tenerife. Other materials, which are a sort of testimony of my attendance to the performances of Kane's plays, international conferences, festivals, posters, and other events, are included in the second part named *Matrices*, since they are the living proof of my assistance to such representations in European theatres and other institutions where the work of the playwright has been investigated. Finally, in the third part, under the name of *Pondus*, relevant and personal photographs are included, as long as they were allowed. Finally, an *Epilogus* has been included with some literary quotations that have helped me in this research and the section *Postera Fascia*, which informs about the pseudonym used in publications and events.



## **II. CAPTATIO BENEVOLENTIAE**





Sarah Kane

During the years, I have had contact with Kane's work, I have gone through a path, which may be defined as unusual. An unusual way that I try to show by means of this research, with the intention of expressing softness in a writer, such as Kane, who, among many things, important things was anti-English establishment or anti any -ism or -ment o just anti nothing, only a person without shields.<sup>10</sup> Besides, I want to cast an amount of comfort over her, "Hidden Quantum of Solace" over her suicide, and above all a quantum of light over all of us, including myself, over the abyssal way I have passed until here.

In this section, in accordance with the structure chosen for this thesis, I have considered the importance of placing the texts, which I wrote on Sarah Kane and saw the light in *La Opinión* de Tenerife newspaper, which appear in the *Post Datum* of this thesis. They belong to an important part of my path in this research.

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<sup>10</sup> In June 2014, I met the playwright Mark Ravenhill in Hamburg for CDE. He was a friend of Kane in her last months. He said to me (when I asked him about her) that she was a person without shields, very open and very extrovert.





### **III. NARRATIO**



# **1. Kaleidoscopes, Merry-go-rounds, Youth Theatre Group, Death as a Lover**

Sarah Kane was born on 3 February 1971 in Brentwood, Essex, and spent her childhood in the nearby village of Kelvedon Hatch. Her parents were both journalists, although her mother gave up a full-time work to look after both Sarah and her older brother Simon. They were Christians, and Kane became Evangelical while she was a teenager. She went to Shenfield Comprehensive School, and wrote short stories and poems. Kane became interested in theatre at an early age and acted with the Basildon Youth Theatre group. After school she chose to do drama at Bristol University, graduating with first class honours, then did a MA at Birmingham University. However, at university, she took a confrontational attitude to some of her tutors. When one accused her of writing a "pornographic essay," she threw porn mags at him at the next tutorial. Such provocations make good stories, but the truth is always more complex because her behaviour resulted in much inconvenience for herself. She suffered from depression and had spells in hospital. A suicide attempt using sleeping pills was unsuccessful, but a few days later on 20 February 1999, at London's Kings' College Hospital, where she was being treated, in the middle of the night when she was left alone for 90 minutes, she slipped out to the toilet and hanged herself by shoelaces. Her family and friends are still asking why she was not identified as an at-risk patient, and why she was not under 24-hours supervision.

Many people have tried to explain Kane's death, to tie the loose ends into a neat thesis. Some say that, when she lost her belief in God, she lost her reason for living. Others have begun to iconize her - the tortured artist.

Harold Pinter wished he had been surprised when he heard of her death, but he was not:

She talked about it a great deal. She just said it was on the cards, you know, and I had to say, "Come on! For God's sake! I remember a line in *Crave*: Death is my lover, and he wants to move in. That's quite a line, isn't it?." She felt man's inhumanity to man so profoundly. I believe that's what finally killed her. She couldn't stand the bloody thing any more. (Hattenstone, 34)

Pinter also added, "She was so naked, and her work was evidently so naked. She had no protective skins at all." (Ibid)

Although her talent was recognised early and the Royal Court Theatre staged many of her works, Kane's impact and status as a dramatist has also been subject to extreme pronouncements, veering from outright acclamation to curt dismissal. Therefore, to provoke such extreme responses of the plays one has to point to the fact that we are onto something important.

Since 1995 drama departments in British universities started using Kane's work in their teaching and at least one of her plays has been in professional repertoire continuously throughout Europe. Official translations have been made into Italian, Portuguese, Norwegian, Danish, Slovak and German.<sup>11</sup>

The following quotation by Domenic Dromgoole can help to give a more accurate image about how Kane was. At the same time, it can serve to conclude these biographical notes:

But anger is a nonsense, and hardly worth the breath in the face of such loss. She was a magnificent girl; she was Cantona and Rimbaud; she was seven pints and puritan water; she was a ferocious vegan who wore leather trousers; she was the most scary scowl and the world's sweetest smile; she was gay and she loved men; she was a frozen stare and a peal of laughter; she was alive. She was alive. (Dromgoole, 164)

## 1.1 Sarah Kane's Plays

In Europe Kane is regarded, as the most significant dramatist to have emerged in the 90's. Especially in Germany, she is considered to have a belief, a prophetic awareness of our modern terror-haunted world more than any of her contemporaries. With her death, many people were attracted to her work, perhaps because they articulated a kind of empathy with her state of depression.

Kane has said little about the meaning and background of her plays. She coincides with Samuel Beckett in the explicit refusal to reduce her plays to codified interpretations. For her, the plays are attempts to depict the landscapes of violation, of loneliness, of power, of violence, of mental collapse and most consistently the landscapes of love, in basic dramatic forms, which work effectively on stage. Besides, it is the realization of the plays themselves, rather than the elaboration of an ideology, which concerns her most. The following quotation can throw light on her concerns about theatre:

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<sup>11</sup> In Spain until now there are no official translations of Kane's plays and work. There are translations made by Argentinean theatre directors and Spanish actors, such as Eva Varela, who has translated *4.48 Psychosis* to be performed, but they are not registered as official, because there is no permission by Kane's brother Simon Kane.

What I can do is to put people through an intense experience. Maybe in a small way from that you can change things. (Sierz, 121)

All of her plays: *Blasted*, *Phaedra's Love*, *Skin*, *Cleansed*, *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis* add up to a body of work, which pushed recklessly at the naturalistic boundaries of theatre.

### ***Blasted***

This play was produced by the Royal Court in January 1995. The play begins with a middle-aged man, Ian, who is a journalist and a much younger woman, Cate, entering a luxurious hotel room in Leeds. Their relationship finished long ago, but Ian is still attracted to Cate though she rejects him. Ian is suffering from a terminal illness. Ian is paranoid, he thinks she is being followed and checks the doors and windows and carries a pistol. During the night, Ian threatens, humiliates and finally rapes Cate. It turns out that Ian's paranoia is not unfounded, when a soldier does break into the hotel room. War is raging outside the hotel and its full brutality and destructive force blasts into the room, exploding the lives of all three characters. It is as though the act of rape, which blasts the inner world of both victim and perpetrator, has also destroyed the world outside the room. In the final images, Ian is reduced to his base essence: a human being, weeping, shitting, lonely, broken, dying and, in the play's final moments, comforted.

*Blasted*, caused critics "to call it and the theatre a disgrace" (Mortimer, 7) because provoked outrage, but in the years before her suicide in 1999 she came to be recognised as an agonised, brilliantly poetic voice.

### ***Phaedra's Love***

1996: Gate Theatre.

Kane adapts and directs the classical story *Phaedra* by Seneca. In this play, she continues the process of fragmenting naturalism and it is her first play to deal with what to become her main theme: love. Here, again, the world of the stage is dark and extreme but now the source of pain has narrowed down from civil war to war within the family. Kane transposes the classical text to a present day, dysfunctional, British-seeming royal household. Hippolytus, far from being an athletic hunter, is a grungy, reclusive slob of a prince whose

denial of love is expressed not in celibacy but in the indiscriminate indulgence of someone who treats sex as junk food. His sexual impulse is uncontrollable and it is expressed in masturbation or in the degradation of his sexual partners into objects. Phaedra, his stepmother, is in love with her son. Her drive to submit herself to the impossibility of her desire, to lose herself within it, is the opposite of Hippolytus's and forms the second of the twin impulses that move the family towards a violent destruction.

The sheer impossibility of survival in either of these emotional conditions, total self-abnegation or total self-preservation, forms the bleak backdrop to Phaedra's journey. Abused by Hippolytus, she finds the ultimate self-destruction in suicide. Hippolytus, publicly accused of his mother's rape, refuses to defend himself and is torn apart by the mob. He remains, in his mordant final line, emotionally intact, even as his body is dismembered and its fragments lie about him.

## ***Skin***

1997: Channel 4.

*Skin* is a ten minutes television script. A skinhead, Billy, comes in contact with a black girl. One of them is a victim.

## ***Cleansed***

1998: Royal Court Theatre Downstairs.

In this play, Kane offers a trans-historical setting of university/concentration camp/war zone, series of successive mutilations and parody references to a revengeful Biblical God. *Cleansed* focuses on the fascist exclusion from society of everyone who does not conform to its idea of "normality": the drug addict, the homosexual, the psychotic, the mentally disabled, the alien... Here, the powerful physical impact of the theatrical imagery is as important as the dialogue. Kane dedicated *Cleansed* to her fellow playwright and friend Ravenhill.

In *Cleansed* the stories of Carl and Grace are interwoven in 20 short scenes. As it has been said, the play takes place in an institution, which is called a university but seems more like a concentration camp. Carl's persecuted affair with Rod and Grace's unending quest for her dead brother, Graham, drive the plot and the violence. Tinker, the doctor and drug dealer

of this institution perpetuates the violence. Tinker both commits the atrocities and orders others, invisible voices, to commit them. Unlike *Blasted*, the violence runs only in one direction: Carl and Grace are victims of violence but never perpetrators. Their love, which keeps their hope alive, also keeps them from fighting back, from realizing the injustice of their situation.

Therefore, in these three plays: *Blasted*, *Phaedra's Love* and *Cleansed* we can see how Kane has abolished the safe distance between the audience and the disturbing events on stage. Her spectators are not allowed the detachment, which permits television audiences to watch similar atrocities with separation and pity. However, she rejects the idea that her plays intended to shock and insists that she wanted to tell the truth:

As a writer, I don't believe I have a responsibility to the audience. My responsibility is to the truth; however, difficult truth happens to be. (Sierz, 121)

But the truth is always shocking in a world like this.

## ***Crave and 4.48 Psychosis***

*Crave*: 1998 Traverse Theatre

*4.48 Psychosis*: 2000 Royal Court Jerwood Theatre Upstairs.

By the time of *Cleansed* Kane had abandoned Naturalism entirely, and her last two plays: *Crave* (1998) and *4.48 Psychosis* (2000), are largely dispensed with formal notions of character and narrative. These last two plays, reminiscent of Samuel Beckett's later work, become far more introspective than *Blasted* and *Phaedra's Love*, exploring individual mindscapes and concentrating upon themes such as loss, the nature of love, and of course suicide, as we can see in the following examples:

I have become so depressed by the fact of my mortality that I  
have decided to commit suicide

I do not want to live

(*4.48 Psychosis*, 207)

I have resigned myself to death this year (Ibid, 208)

**M** If you commit suicide you'll only have to come back go  
through it again.



(Crave, 188)

These two plays are companion pieces, both reflecting a shift in her work. While images were central to her previous plays, these final pieces contain verbal images, and she achieves this through the creation of a distinctly poetic style. Both plays are performance texts with no stage directions, and in the case of *4.48 Psychosis*, no speaker designations. Then these two plays offer a wide range of possibilities for directors, as their settings are not defined. Whereas in her previous plays Kane had been very particular about providing details of location, such as the "*expensive hotel room in Leeds*" (*Blasted*, 3).

In these two plays, characters are fragmented into thousands of parts in both *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis*, and sometimes disappeared as in the case of *4.48 Psychosis*. In Torti Alcayaga's words:

Le théâtre de Kane s'efface doucement du champ de la réalité. Au centre de cette disparition se trouve la défaite du personnage principale entié sémiotique de la représentation. Chez Sarah Kane cet élément, finalement assez rarement remis en cuase au théâtre, se défait pièce a pièce, se fragmente en mille moreceaux se répondatn les uns dans les autres et recompensant san fin d'autres figures qui sont de la fois les mêmes personajes et des personajes différents. (Torti-Alcayaga, 56-57)

In both plays, *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis*, due to this fragmentation what we can receive is a profound silence:

No one speaks

(*4.48 Psychosis*, 243)

*Crave* is a virtually actionless piece of word-music and represents a definite continuation of the formal and thematic paths Kane had been following for the previous plays. Here four people (A,M,C,B) sit on chairs facing the audience and talk to the audience separately. These people are much more like voices in a composition, in a concert, because this emotionally devastated piece of theatre seems to aspire to the impact of music. It is more a poem than a play. The overwhelming impression is that the four voices are voices from within and without one individual life, yet the stage is occupied by four real bodies. Fragments of speech reveal a litany, a long list of rape, infidelity, loneliness, familial

rejection, romantic rejection and childlessness. Each voice has a set response to what life has dealt them –anger, indignity, baffled argumentativeness and near hysteria, respectively – and this is maintained at a consistently high pitch throughout. The play is very gritty, graphic and provokes great emotions. The key is the play's insistence on what life "does" to people. The voices are embittered, dismayed and often bewildered by an existence over which they have no control. The complete lack of communication between them reinforces the isolation to which they are all condemned, and when the issue of blame and responsibility finally rears its head, it is in the supremely narcissistic form of righteous self-loathing. Besides the voices' pain is as psychological as it is physical. *Crave* ends in a falling towards light. It is, like *Cleansed* and *Blasted*, an ambiguous redemption.

*Crave* is considered her most mature play and was performed under the pseudonym of Maire Kelvedon so that it could be viewed without the taint of its author's notorious reputation.

4.48 *Psychosis* is Kane's most experimental play and was completed shortly before she died. This, Kane's shortest and most fragmented theatrical work, dispenses not only with plot but character as well and no indication is given as to how many actors were intended to voice the play. The title refers to 4:48 am, a time which is mentioned more than once in the play. According to David Greig (Kane, xvi) the title derives from the time —4.48 am—when Kane, in her depressed state, frequently woke in the morning. Therefore, *4.48 Psychosis* is a report from a region of the mind that most of us hope never to visit but from which many people cannot escape. In this text, Kane pushes further still the formal elements she had explored in *Crave*. The writing consists of monologues and fragments of dialogues taking place between figures that resemble a doctor and a patient. Unnamed, the voice of authority might also be a lover, a friend, or perhaps the patient's own dialogue with themselves. The whole play describes the internal landscape of suicidal psychosis. A landscape even more extreme and pitiless even than those describes in the four previous plays. This play is an act of generosity by the author because it was written whilst suffering from depression, which is a destructive rather than creative condition.

Finally, again according to Greig these last two plays are not really the play of an author given to the readers, they are more than that, as he states:

Kane's last two plays is not to search for the author behind the words but freight the plays with our own presence, our own fears of the self-destructive act and our own impulses towards it. (Greig, xviii)

## *Unpublished Monologues*

At the Theatre Collection in Bristol University,<sup>12</sup> Department of Drama there are three unpublished monologues written by Kane, when she was a student there. Kane did not retrieve all copies of these pieces. During her final year at Bristol University, she gave copies for the three monologues and does not appear to have asked for them back, with the happy result that researchers can still read them. In the controlled theatrical environment of the monologue, they offer a unique insight into the prehistory of Kane's emergency as a major playwright; and, while there is much of interest in the monologues themselves, they also give a clear sense of the trajectory of her creative journey when she burst into public attention with the success of *Blasted*.

These monologues show a remarkably swift evolution in confidence, daring and sophistication. They mark the first appearance of a set of concerns that would continue to animate her work right to the end; at times, she turned directly to her early pieces as a storehouse of fragments and intense feelings that she used to animate the later plays. What they also show, very clearly, is a deliberate reconstruction of political playwriting: away from the models that had dominated the two decades before and towards a revaluation of formal experiment as a locus for a new utopian politics.

These monologues are titled *Sick*. The monologue titled *What she said* is narrated by a bisexual woman. A rape perpetrated by a boy-friend is narrated in the monologue named *Comic monologue*. The problems of anorexia are described in the monologue titled *Starved*. This woman, (who is the narrator in the three monologues), is showing her emotions, as a victim, in the most oppressive way. In these three monologues the essence of Kane as a writer is contained, in the sense that many of their sentences are used in the next plays specially in *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis* and above all in the matter of style, because from the very beginning Kane shows a distinctive style focused in brevity and silence, an economy of words in favour of the most pure emotions, which in case of the use of many words are drown. The presentation of silence is one of the most specific dramatic effects. What Kane does, in these monologues, is to use silence wisely, in order to achieve profound effects and to create the required mood and tension. Kane uses silence here to face us into a myriad of

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<sup>12</sup> As I have said before I read them in September 2008 at Bristol University under the supervision of Professor Jones.

struggles: rape, bisexual love and anorexia. Thus, silence is carefully calculated in these three monologues.

## **2. Margaret Thatcher's Society**

In May 1979, Margaret Thatcher became Britain's first Women Prime Minister. Some in Britain welcomed her subsequent attempts to introduce economic "realism" to a country plagued by strikes and inflation, to weaken the power of the Trade Unions and to reduce the expenditure on public services and transfer responsibility for many areas of welfare onto the individual. Others saw her abandonment, in favour of a more confrontational style, of the consensus politics that had dominated British government since the war, the dismantling of British industry, the privatization of state-owned companies, the attempt to reduce public expenditure and her governments' increased administrative centralization, as authoritarian as uncompassionate.

Even in the first year of the Conservative parliament, the cuts imposed unexpectedly by the Arts Council made it manifestly apparent that Margaret Thatcher's economic policies would inevitably have a detrimental effect on the subsidized theatre. What theatre workers did not expect was that, particularly in her second term after 1983, Thatcher would systematically attempt to eliminate the socialist structures underpinning many areas of British society. In doing so, she would initiate a wider cultural shift that would affect not only dramatic and theatrical discourse but would also force dramatists and practitioners to re-evaluate the role of theatre in contemporary Britain.

### **2.1 Thatcherism**

Margaret Thatcher was not only Britain's first woman Prime Minister but also the first leader since Lord Liverpool in the 1820s to win three elections in a row and to hold office for the longest uninterrupted period the previous century. She was also the only twentieth century Prime Minister to lend her name to a political doctrine-Thatcherism. Her ideology was born not of a fondness for intellectual reflection but of utilitarian practicality. Although Thatcher often turned to intellectuals for advice, she herself was not intellectual.

Thatcher's premiership was characterized by her antipathy to the consensus approach that had dominated post-war British politics, particularly in government relations with the Trade Unions. Under her leadership, the discourse of post-war Conservatism, based on the

maintenance of traditional institutions and of benevolent patronage, gave way to a radical discourse grounded on a Neo-liberal belief in individualism, competition and anti-statism. Besides the radical Right began to take ideas seriously, particularly those of the free-market and monetarism even in things such as education and welfare. She reduced liberty by giving too much power to the executive and by reducing the influence of parliament. With her theories based on monetarism, a natural level of unemployment was acceptable to the Thatcherites, in order to balance the monetary growth. Thus, all of this led to the public perception in the early 1980s of a government that was materialistic and uncaring. Due to the fact that monetarism is associated with the free market, the benefits of lower taxation, and the virtue of privatization and deregulation in industry and commerce. It also suggested the abolition of protective legislation such as rent controls, employment legislation, minimum wage levels, regional and industrial subsidies, and the constitutional limitation of taxation and public spending. However, this strong capitalism involved voluntary buying and selling, as an essential part for political freedom. Moreover, this new ideology based on money was one the strongest and most creative forces to attempt by millions of individuals to promote their own interests, to live their lives by their own values and to change the heart and soul of the nation. The discourse claimed that the free-market would permit society to adapt to a changing world economy. All began to be reduced to an enterprise culture. The poor now ceased to be considered as "disadvantaged" but were either scroungers or the victims of their own moral inadequacies. This was combined with the new language of computers, marketing and management-speak, which were not only emulated but also made barbarous in Caryl Churchill's portrayal of the moral status of the discourse in her play, *Serious Money*.

Therefore, Thatcherism appears in some measure to have been shaped to engage with the masochism, anxieties and sense of lost self-esteem of the British people. Fact that is going to appear very clearly in Kane's plays, especially in her last play *4.48 Psychosis*.

Thatcher was one the few Conservative cabinet ministers to have voted consistently for the restoration of the death penalty.

Ronald Millar, a theatrical adviser and playwright, wrote many of Thatcher's speeches<sup>13</sup> and was responsible for Thatcher's quotation from St. Francis of Assisi after winning the 1979 election:

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<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, he advised her on the vocal delivery necessary for the effective presentation of his "scripts" made for her. The Prime Minister evidently recognized that theatre was not merely a source of frivolous entertainment.

Where there is discord, may we bring harmony  
Where there is error, many we bring truth.  
Where there is doubt, may we bring faith.  
Where there is despair, may we bring hope.

(Young, 4006)

This quotation proved to be a total contradiction because during the following years of her leadership people's living conditions were locked into a relentless competition for material resources and growing everyday more solitary, nasty, brutish and rich.

In the Falkland Islands war (or Malvinas), she claimed that "nothing so thrills the British people as going to war for a just cause" (Young, 276). She had given the nation the opportunity to experience that thrill and in doing so, it was implied, she had instinctively responded to the people's nature in their beast or animal sense as it is our deep aggressive primitive nature.

The "New Right" had much deeper roots in human nature, doing the best for themselves in defence of individuals.

In 1985, the Church of England blamed the government's emphasis on individualism rather than collective obligation for the social decline of the inner cities. The Prime Minister viewed this as left-wing politicization of an institution whose role should be primarily spiritual and moral, a role which, she complained, it was not fulfilling. This conflict of roles experienced by the church during the Thatcher years was examined by David Hare in *Racing Demon* in 1990.

Poverty became a significant feature of British society because of the severity of unemployment suffered most by blacks, males, school-leavers and those over 50.

According to Stuart Hall, the model of Thatcherite Britain was the following: "Mass unemployment as a permanent feature; at the bottom, the permanently unemployed and the marginals, dependant on falling welfare entitlements; in the middle, the regularly employed, and increasingly divided by enterprise, sector and hierarchy; at the top the increasing wealth and income of capitalists and top managers." (89)

Thus, Britain of the 1980s was "two nations" a society divided not only geographically but also between the "haves" and "have-nots." Ian Gilmour recalled that "beggars had vanished for forty years but now have reappeared on the streets of London, which was almost like a third-world capital." (115)

In 1981, riots had begun to occur in Brixton in London, in Toxteth in Liverpool and Moss Side in Manchester. These riots were followed in Birmingham, Leeds, Bradford and in twenty-five other towns. The contrast between north/south was extreme. However, those who were willing to leave their home-towns and seek work in the more prosperous south could not afford housing. Thatcher refused to accept that the riots were a consequence of her economic policies or of the resultant unemployment. Her ministers set out to explain the riots in cultural terms ranging from poor schooling, single parents, the media and, behind all these, 1960s permissiveness.

The "New Right" considered the group described as college-educated people (among them there were the scientists, teachers and others such as psychologists, social workers who had made their careers in the expanding public sector) as anti-business, permissive and unpatriotic. This group was generally left wing, which implied it to be collectivist, egalitarian and anti-capitalist. Many came from the working-class rather than Margaret Thatcher's petite-bourgeois background. They were often unsure of their position in the class structure and, while having graduated beyond the working class, were unable to adopt fully the materialistic values of the middle and upper classes. This new post-war declassed intellectual had been first seen on the stage in the character of Jimmy Porter in John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* in 1956, and had appeared during the 1960s in many television dramas. Now it was imperative that this group be assimilated into the capitalist system by means of an education in the realities of business and economics. Thatcher recognized and accepted this challenge in all areas of the public sector, including the arts. However, in the world designed by Mrs Thatcher mainstream intellectuals were being down-graded, if not displaced.

Mrs Thatcher and her "New Right" considered that the sixties had denigrated the discipline and old virtues for the society thanks to their fashionable theories and permissive values. Besides the break-up of the family and the weakening of the authority of parents and teachers were identified with the sixties, instead of being considered as a much deeper change of the human evolution based only in an adoration of money and market. Therefore, in Thatcher's time money and market had begun to penetrate into all areas of life.

As a result, over 90 per cent of the people in the performing arts, education and the creative world were against her. She had provoked a great intense aversion among the intellectual group because had reduced the financial support for such cultural institutions as the universities and the arts. However, not simply the financial cuts generated the virulence of the attack on Thatcher but also the savage and insulting way in which she and her

government ministers thought it necessary to address them. Those who did not share their views were deprecated and humiliated.

Thatcher's intolerant and aggressive attitude to the European Community led to the resignation of Foreign Secretary, Geoffrey Howe.

The response of their victims was seen in the image of the British society as coarser and more selfish. However, Thatcherism philosophy with its gospel of free enterprise, patriarchal respectability and authoritarian order had a powerful influence upon economic and social policy even nowadays and not only in Great Britain.

## **2.2 The Theatre in Thatcher's Time**

In totalitarian systems "all artists, not only writers, are hated, because they can never own, or direct, their talent, what makes them artists," paraphrasing Kingsley Amis (2). Everything is converted into meaningless patterns in order to value nothing in favour of costing and selling everything. For example in theatre, the typical product is plays without plots to give way to the existence for a commercial theatre.

In Thatcher's time, the theatre was being made to realize that it did not have a right to be supported by the state. It was forced to be conceived as a commercial enterprise. The demand for economic efficiency was now more significant than the assurance of aesthetic quality or the promotion of innovation. The acceptance of Thatcherite values led to a scenario with a necessary product designed to attract the greatest number of customers. Only a successful theatre was one that attracted a large audience.

With a decade of Thatcherism, many of the statements that had inspired the founding of the Arts Council in 1946 appeared strangely anachronistic. Thus, in 1988 some voices among academics and such theatre luminaries as Howard Brenton, Churchill, Max Stafford-Clark, David Edgar, Trevor Griffiths, Peter Hall, Sheila Hancock, Verity Lambert, Jane Lapotaire, John McGrath, Pinter, Jonathan Pryce, Juliet Stevenson, Janet Suzman, Timberlake Wertenbaker and Arnold Wesker were raised in complaint reiterating the liberal, humanitarian aims that had inspired the founding of the Arts Council.

This situation was caused because Mrs Thatcher wanted every pound put into the arts to return two pounds into the Treasury.



### 2.3 The Response of the Left-Wing Dramatists

The left-wing dramatists such as Brenton, Hare, Edward Bond, and Churchill, whose plays have been applauded on the stages during the 1970s, were the first to dramatically analyze the values of the Thatcherite ideology. However, the audience was becoming increasingly unsympathetic to socialist politics and the majority of mainstream theatre was beginning to focus on the private and personal. Besides, racism was emanating from within the working class. Thus, in the 1980s the Marxist images of capitalist oppression shown by some these playwrights gave way to more generalized consideration of the extinction or survival of the human species. Then, it is very relevant to admit that with the Left routed largely by its own sectarianism and discredited in the eyes of the public, and the country now steeped in Thatcherite values, the left-wing writer had lost his audience.

The response of all these writers was moral rather than ideological. Sensibility and charity were placed in opposition to materialism and greed. As the Thatcherites had systematically set out demonize the "enlightened" and "progressive" values of the 1960s, so in turn these authors shaped their drama, with its reference to good and evil, to demonize the ideology of the New Right. In addition, they thought that the Left must recognize that politics in Britain had changed and in recognizing this change, the Left had to revitalize itself. They believed that the socialist artist could find a new role in left-wing politics by integrating in their plays the new cultural movements and many minorities to create a major force such as the gays and lesbians or the disabled or the jobless.

In *Top Girls* (1982), Churchill interrogated feminism in the context of a country governed and being ideologically reshaped by a woman Prime Minister, who was a "bourgeois feminist" which means individualism. In this play is shown once again how women have in common gender and patriarchal oppression, but they have failed to derive strength from unity except on rare occasions. They all ignore the silent waitress who serves their meal, and in doing so perpetuate the servile status of women. Thus, *Top Girls* also implies that others will be at the bottom of the social pile and suggests that the Thatcherite government, with its emphasis upon competitive capitalism, will do nothing to help them. This plays also shows that the only way for a woman to attain her true potential in Thatcherite Britain is to become selfish, greedy and aggressive.

Churchill's socialist-feminist interrogation of women's status in Britain under Thatcher therefore concludes that in spite of its high profile during the 1970s the feminist

movement had not significantly advanced the cause of women because it had not spoken with a unified voice. The mere presence of a woman Prime Minister, herself a bourgeois feminist, offered no greater opportunities for the majority women who could or did not aspire to be "top girls."

If I have chosen Churchill to be explained instead of the other playwrights, it is because she reflects the culture of this new world only as "money-making" and shows the role of women in a society like this. Kane was a feminist according to Prof. Simon Jones,<sup>14</sup> and it is an important fact to understand her plays, because in politics she was neither a left wing nor a new right writer. She was a playwright under the influence of Thatcher's legacy not only in theatre.

## **2.4 Some Conclusions: The Legacy of Thatcher's Theatre**

The changes, particularly in the theatre's economics and management, imposed during the 1980s largely by means of arts funding, have not been revoked yet in the New Labour government's refusal to reverse or modify many Thatcherite policies.

Therefore, the most notable effect of Thatcherism has been the redefinition of the cultural status of the British theatre, which, with the aid of the Arts Council, had been fixed after the theatrical "revolution" of 1956. The Thatcherite government's unwillingness to continue to increase funding and its begrudging were intended to convey the impression that theatre was not an agency of cultural, spiritual, social or psychological welfare, but an entertainment industry that was otherwise irrelevant to the workings of society. By restraining funding, the government relocated theatre at a distance from topical concerns.

The major feature of Thatcher's theatre was the employment of funding to obtain more control and to inculcate the values of the market place, where everything was a matter of "theatrical product" instead of artistic creation. Consequently, in the Thatcherite perception, drama and the subsidized theatre were associated with a period that had spawned the parasitic and unappreciative intellectual class with its trendy, progressive and alternative ideas, which had been considered during the 1960s as radical and innovative, but were now demonized as the cause of contemporary and moral decline.

The cultural shift inevitably had its effect not only on the funding and management of the theatre, but also on its discourse. However, during Thatcherism women in theatre

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<sup>14</sup> Prof. Jones at Department of Drama, Bristol University was one of Kane's teachers.

promoted a new dramatic discourse in the form of the non-linear narrative, which was adopted by both the mainstream and commercial theatre. In this legacy Kane can be rooted.

Unfortunately, the British theatre was turned into a commodity to be purchased by those seeking entertainment by humour or spectacle in Thatcher's time. Consequently, the British theatre was, once again, an irrelevant luxury.

## 2.5 Kane in the British Theatre. Some Considerations

I am convinced that the theatre is part of the most fundamental of human needs. I believe that if a city is destroyed by a bomb, the people first look for food and shelter, and having provided these necessities they start to tell their stories. For me the function of the theatre is to allow experimentation through art in a way that we are not able to experiment effectively in real life. If we experiment in the theatre, such as an act of extreme violence, then maybe we can repulse it is such, to prevent the act of extreme violence out on the street. I believe that people can change and that it is possible for us as a species to change our future. It's for this that I write. (Sarah Kane).<sup>15</sup>

The modern screen is obsessed with guilt, it reiterates violent revenge and vigilantism. In the past, drama recreated itself in a new human subjectivity and a new human reality. This was the drama of the Greeks, the Jacobean, the nineteenth-century *fin de siècle* and early modernity. For the Greeks the earth was still sacred and so they kept the tragedy and the comedy apart. The Jacobean prepared the earth for trade, they rejoined the tragic and the comic and in it, reason was practical. Post-modernity abandons reason. There is no meaning. In its place we have the theatre of the tragic-comic, the Absurd, post-modern primitivism, reactionary spiritualism, Beckett and the other clowns of Auschwitz not justified by their pathos, illuminated by their irony or exonerated by their bitterness.

In the beginning, the theatre was a dithyrambic song: free people singing in the open air Carnival Feasts. Later, the ruling classes took possession of the theatre and built their dividing walls. First, they divided the people, separating actors from spectators: people who act and people who watch. Secondly, among the actors, they separated the protagonist from the mass. Nowadays new work in theatre after Beckett has had to reckon with the collapse of traditional boundaries. The collapse of boundaries-between cultures, between sexes, between the arts, between genres, between criticism and art, performance and text, sign and signified, and so on. Such perception bred the sense of an emerging new culture where the character in

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<sup>15</sup> Giammarco, 1997.

turn is being eclipsed. Thus, a new cultural value accounts for the disappearance of character. This disappearance of character is rooted on the cultural logic of late capitalism, a post-modern vision anchored in post-marxism, multiculturalism, theories of power, violence and body cult. Furthermore, shopping has become society's cultural activity. Everything has succumbed to the store. The neo-liberal ideologies (Thatcher's, etc...) are based in a fixed reality that everything is culture. Theatre can be seen as shopping, as culture of the commodity. The following quotation serves to illustrate this peril:

In the *illus tempus*, we children knew, or thought we knew, that culture was "culture" precisely because it was not the market place. (Elinor Fuchs, 128).

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Ours is a richly confused and hugely verbal age, energized by a multitude of competing discourses. Most of these discourses follow various conventions, social constructions of the dominant culture, which attempts to create a uniformed world, in which we see only "legitimate moves," behaviours which are only permitted by the dominant culture. The consequences of promoting standard of discourse practices may fail to acknowledge that other dimensions of identity transcend issues of language, because there are multiple ways of being.

However, as everything is social, the writer, in this process of socialization from his/her previous inner attempt to write, must follow the convention to share with a possible audience which will secure market privileges but also taking into consideration that our era has a volatile market. Therefore, how much must a writer share with the audience? The writer in the process of socialization has two choices: whether to use the language of power or the language of resistance. The language of power is not only the language of the market. It is also the language admitted by academics and also represents the dominant culture. The language of resistance is the rejection of this language of power.

Thus, Kane, the *enfant terrible* of the English stage in the 1990s, chose the language of resistance to demonstrate that reality is dirty, violent and opaque, her language of resistance, and not expecting rewards from this meretricious civilization. The only thing she expected with her plays was to survive in the human jungle without shields in a metaphorical state of nudity. Unfortunately in her life, she was like a marionette or a puppet that commits suicide on stage with its own threads.

Nevertheless, despite Kane's unfortunate ending she is considered by a respectful number of theatre critics to be one among the great dramatic writers. As the critic Torti-Alcayaga states:

En cinq courtes pièces, Sarah Kane est entrée de plein droit et manière fracassante dans le Partenón des grands dramaturges britanniques de cette seconde moitié du vingtième siècle. Bien au delà du scandale causé par la violence et la crudité de ses trois pièces auprès d'une presse qui fait du scandale son fond de commerce, c'est l'absence radicale de compromis et la profondeur de son oeuvre, incarnées dans une dramaturgie résolument novatrice, qui font d'elle un jalon important de l'histoire du théâtre. (Torti-Alcayaga, 51)

When Kane makes her appearance in the English theatre, the political climate is dominated by Margaret Thatcher's materialistic ideas. As we have seen in the previous section, the profound changes Thatcher put in place, altered the economic and cultural landscape of the United Kingdom, as she curtailed the power of the trade unions and the universities, cut back the welfare state and fostered a non-flexible labour market, which she believed would create jobs and could adapt to market conditions. However, exacerbated by the global recession of the early 1980s, her policies, known as "Thatcherism" were and remain, highly controversial and polarising. Her supporters argued that she was responsible for rejuvenating the British economy, while her opponents said that she was responsible for mass unemployment and a vast increase in inequality between rich and poor. But what is really true is that, the word "Thatcherism" is associated with individualism and materialism, or in Rodríguez Gago's words (referring to a study of the main playwrights at this time): "sociedad individualista y materialista cimentada por Margaret Thatcher." (Rodríguez Gago, 279).

Therefore, Thatcher's Conservatism, apart from weakening the power of trade unionism, meant the disintegration of a powerful socialist movement in favour of a catastrophe, which first was thought as an ethics for the UK. As a result social and urban fragmentation moved into the theatrical space, because the theatre is a barometer of society and what we are going to see in the theatre of this period is desperation in personal life, scorned family life, the search for security, meaning and affection, and especially inhuman interpersonal relations. What is more, a new brutalism appears on stage, whose marks are violent, anarchic, physically and sexually brutal, because the selfish values of Thatcherism

had filtered through to the present generation of school children, and aggression and bullying in schools have risen. In a word, nihilism in the face of the world.

Paradoxically, in this British New Drama we are going to see "the revival of new writing" (Sierz: 2004, 47), especially from the 1990s onwards. In this explosion of new plays the writer – rather than the director, dramaturge or designer- is the centre of the theatrical experience. With this revival "the British tradition of making words more important than gestures is going to be emphasised" (Ibid). As a result, during the 1990s, British theatre experienced an explosion of creativity and an enormous growth in the production of new writing, much of which was characterised by a new sensibility and by new violent theatrical images. According to Aleks Sierz (2004, 50) "there is a kind of renaissance with more writers than Periclean Athens, Shakespeare's England or even than the first post-war wave which began in 1956." There are "more than 150 new playwrights" (Ibid). It has to be accepted that "in terms of style and sensibility this British Drama of the 1990s has been distinctive and distinctly different from the drama of previous decades" (Ibid). One of the defining characteristics was an overriding obsession with crime and violence. The stage became a stalking ground for drama whose primary concerns were an exploration of the gruesome and outlandish. Often the violence and bloodshed were accompanied by an equal reliance on black humour and flippant sense of irony. This gave these writers a reputation for moral ambiguity. Thus, they scrutinise features of the urban landscape with an unindignant wit and a sharp eye for the quirks and contradictions. The protagonists peer with a kind of existential puzzlement at their own affectless, morally disconnected behaviour.

Notwithstanding, of all these new playwrights "Kane emerges as the most far-reaching experimentalist (Ibid). While some writers hold onto certain components of critical realism in their work (i.e. Mark Ravenhill), "her plays represent the most devastating overturning of that form, while the plays of others mimicked film and TV" (Sierz: 2004, 53).

Kane's plays use images and movement to re-imagine the stage with the clear idea that content is nothing without a specific form. In this sense, each of her plays literally recast dramatic forms anew. In her own words:

Inevitably, what you're studying is what's already been discovered. As a writer, I wanted to do things that hadn't been done, to invent new forms, find new modes of representation. (Sierz, 92)

Furthermore, Kane cared deeply "about the role of theatre in society and in the individual's heart" (Dromgoole, 164). She once said: "I hate the idea of theatre just being an evening pastime. It should be emotionally and intellectually demanding. I love football. The level of analyses that you listen to on the terrace is astonishing. If people did that in theatre... but they don't. They expect to sit back and not participate. If there's a place for musicals, opera or whatever, then there should be a place for good new writing, irrespective of box-office." (Kane, 1999)<sup>16</sup>

Like many of her characters, much of Kane's writing transgressed dramatic boundaries and was not afraid to take risks. Besides what really shocks is that her plays are hand-to-hand combat with an audience, as it is a public spectacle from which one cannot distance oneself as one can with film. She had a ruthlessly uncompromising vision and total rejection of the British naturalistic inheritance.

Hers is an experiential theatre where language is liberated from banality returning poetry to speech thanks to its linguistic economy. A black sense of humour, dramatic tension and romantic agony are some of the characteristics of Kane's theatre together with a slight sign of hope. According to Rodríguez Gago the main theme of Kane's plays is the physical and psychological destruction of individuals: "la destrucción física y síquica de los individuos en un mundo cruel y violento es el tema central del teatro de Kane." (Rodríguez Gago, 278). Therefore, we have to bear in mind that the effect of her theatre was and is still disturbing.

Edward Bond states that "Kane is the crisis of modern drama" (209).<sup>17</sup> She tried to understand the logic of humanness and in it to rediscover drama. Thus, in her drama, situation takes precedence over character. Her violence is the sum of humanness, meaning is totally ineffective. The object of her drama is to do justice in the manner of a Greek tragedy. She became the spokeswoman and spoke for her society instead of speaking of her society.

*Blasted* demonstrated that Kane was really alienated from the social and political context of the 1990s, yet at the same time her writing was deeply informed by an engagement with past literary and theatrical traditions:

#### - The Classics

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<sup>16</sup> Kane, Sarah (1999). "The late Sarah Kane in her own words." *Independent* 24.2.99

<sup>17</sup> De Vos, Laurens and Saunders, Graham (editors) 2010.

- William Shakespeare
- Antonin Artaud
- Samuel Beckett
- Howar Barker's Theatre of Catastrophe.
- Edward Bond
- Harold Pinter
- Jeremy Weller "*Mad*"

She also studied at Birmingham and Shakespeare's birthplace of Stratford-Upon-Avon is quite close. There are many and permanent theatre performances in this village. She was influenced by many tendencies, contexts and authors, which she read and even was present at performances, as a matrix.<sup>18</sup> All of these influenced her but in the most innovative way, because she did not follow them in an orthodox manner.

There is a tradition of anger and cruelty and rebellion rooted in British theatre, but this tradition is porous in Kane, in the sense that Kane forsook, consciously, a transcendent God that softens this cruelty, violence, non-sense. Hers is a theatre that looks for solace. Violence on stage from 1950 until Kane was asking for an answer because Aristotelian theatrical form could no longer be compatible with expressing the contemporary experience of the modern world. The Aristotelian formulae of:

- 1 mimetic illusionism
- 2 narrative
- 3 impersonation
- 4 and dialogue

were replaced by an autonomous performance seeking to go beyond dramatic action, beyond impersonation, beyond dialogue and, finally, beyond illusionism, referentiality and representation.

Kane does not fit into any catalogue although she does participate in the replacement of classical features. Nevertheless, her theatre has no historical precedent. She grew out of a

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<sup>18</sup> I sat at the university libraries probably in one of the seats where Kane was sat, at Bristol and Birmingham, reading books on theatre that surrounded this space at the seat. According to my own point of view and research in Birmingham, I discovered, in one of these spaces at the library of Birmingham, a playwright Eve Lewis, author of *Ficky Stingers* whose technique and use of words influenced Kane.



particularly English culture of "Theatre in Education." She directed plays at school, directed and acted while studying for a BA in Drama at Bristol University, and subsequently enrolled for an MA in David Edgar's writing programme at Birmingham University. However, as she admitted: "Never cared much for playwrights." (Tim Etchells, 1999: 105 in *Kane in Context*).<sup>19</sup> Thus, if we try to establish a kind of hidden line between hers and the rest, in order to follow the constant tendency of our researches to categorize everything, to give it a number and levels, what we obtain in Kane may be a toxic answer.

What we can say about Kane in the British theatre is that she follows a revolution in sensibility initiated by the same Shakespeare himself with *Titus Andronicus* (in *Blasted*) and in 1956 with John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*. Most of her plays came out of writing workshops, besides she ran workshops with visiting writers (Bond, Barker and Pinter among others...). What is notable to highlight is that she was adhered mainly to the features of Beckettian theatre:

- minimalist
- open aesthetics
- immobilised plotting
- a precise, rich language beyond the limits set by "realist" impersonation.

But the most important thing is to say that according to the Beckett scholar Ruby Cohn, Kane moved from "violent" to "linguistic" plays (Cohn, 2001:39 in *Kane in context*).<sup>20</sup>

## 2.6 Kane: "In-yer-face"<sup>21</sup> Theatre." Definitions and its Discontents

Definitions of concepts, or terms, form the foundation of literary theory. They allow us to select and circumscribe the phenomena we want to describe and for which we intend to find persuasive explanations. Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* (1st c.BC) determines some basic

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<sup>19</sup> De Vos, Laurens and Saunders, Graham (editors) (2010). *Sarah Kane in Context*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

<sup>20</sup> De Vos, Laurens and Saunders, Graham (editors) (2010). *Sarah Kane in Context*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

<sup>21</sup> "In-yer-face" is defined by the *New Webster English Dictionary* (1998) as "something latantly aggressive or provocative, impossible to ignore or avoid." The *Collins English Dictionary* (1998) adds the adjective "confrontial." The phrase originated in American sports journalism during the mid-seventies and gradually seeped into more mainstream slang over the following decade.

requirements of a successful definition. Accordingly, definitions are based on a process of abstraction and differentiation. Therefore, the term or observable phenomenon in question has to be situated in a class of similar elements that share crucial characteristics (or semantic features) with the one to be defined. The process of abstraction aims at eliminating certain particular characteristics in order to categorize more general features. However, as promising as abstraction is, it must not lead to over-generalization. When you want to find out, for example, what a birch tree is, it is not a good idea to categorize it as forming part of nature; not because this would not hold true, but because this classification would make it very difficult to determine the specificity that allows you to distinguish the birch tree from any other element forming part of the class of nature. Similarly, over-differentiation is to be avoided; when you want to know what a birch tree is, it would make very little sense to start your thought process with setting up the class of the *betula cylindrotachya* because this category will cover only very particular feature of the phenomenon in question while eliminating the more general ones that would allow you to situate the phenomenon in a wider context. Moderate abstraction and adequate differentiation guarantee the descriptive power and explanatory strength of conceptualizations in literary studies and makes for their epistemic value. Based on this understanding of the nature and function of generic definition in literary criticism, the problematic nature of the following definition for "in yer-face theatre" becomes apparent. According to the critic Aleks Sierz:

The widest definition of in-yer-face theatre [embodied in the work of playwrights such as Sarah Kane, Mark Ravenhill, Philip Ridley, and Martin McDonagh] is any drama that takes the audience by the scruff of the neck and shakes it until it gets the message. It is a theatre of sensation: it jolts both actors and spectators out of conventional responses, touching nerves as provoking alarm. Often such drama employs shock tactics, or is shocking because it is new in tone or structure or because it is bolder or more experimental than what audiences are used to. Questioning moral norms, if affronts the ruling ideas of what can or should be shown onstage; it also taps into more primitive feelings, smashing taboos, mentioning the forbidden, creating discomfort. Crucially, it tells us more about who we really are. Unlike the type of theatre that allows us to sit back and contemplate what we see in detachment, the best in-yer-face theatre takes us on an emotional journey, getting under our skin. It is experiential, not speculative. It implies you are being forced to see something close up, that your personal space has been invaded (...). It suggests the crossing of normal boundaries. In short, it describes perfectly the kind of theatre that puts audiences in just such a situation (4)

However, the problems of the theatre critic Sierz's definition of "in-yer-face theatre" are manifold and show discontents.

This definition gathers too many features that are situated on entirely heterogeneous levels of description: aesthetic rules, moral norms, the empirical recipients' emotions, anthropological constants ("primitive feelings"), and so on. It is circular and opaque to the extent that it uses metaphors to paraphrase the metaphorical *definiendum* (hard to imagine, by the way, how a play is "in-yer-face" by shaking the recipients' neck). First and foremost, however, the definition of "in-yer-face" is far too general. Attributes like "bold", "experimental" can probably be assigned to any art form that, since the early modern period, to say the least, has been bound to fulfil the norm of being new, original in terms of what is shown and how. Phrases like "takes the audience by the scruff of the neck and shakes it until it gets the message" and key words like "sensation" or "shock tactics" suggest that the main focus of Sierz's concept seems to lie in the new British playwrights' blatant depiction of corporeal violence of obscenities. The problem, however, with this definitional feature is that it is also too general. There are so many different instances of theatrical violence in various representation or dramatic contexts that we tend to lose sight of the specific function that the representation of violence is to fulfil in each of these cases. The instances of violence shown in *Sir Gawin and the Green Knight* (late 14<sup>th</sup> c.), in *Titus Andronicus* (1594), in Artaud's *theatre de la cruauté*, in Bret Easton Ellis' *American Psycho* (1991), and in Kane's *Blasted* (1995) are pretty much "in yer-face;" however, having categorized these phenomena under this label, we can absolutely sure that we have lost track of the features that make the dramatic depiction of violence intellectually and aesthetically interesting.

Furthermore, it seems that Sierz wants to abstract the functional context in which violence is used in "in-yer-face theatre" to the field of "morals" in the widest possible sense. What has been said in terms of the far too general concept of the violation of aesthetic norms turns out to be even more problematic in the general field of morals. Stating that plays by author X "smash taboos," "jolts both actors and spectators out of conventional responses," or "questions moral norms" implicitly affirms these norms from the very start, and what is more, it reduces the plays in question to a secondary, or entirely parasitic, phenomenon. The role that violence plays in contemporary British drama is however much more complex and needs a concept that is nuanced enough to go beyond the smug notion of an aesthetic

provocation that always, and necessarily therefore, affirms the norm. Thus, Roger Lüdeke<sup>22</sup> shows, by drawing on the well-established concept of "political theatre," how violence in contemporary drama is connected to an aesthetic stance that allows for a more extensive critique of social relations of power.

### 2.6.1 Some Reflections on the Concept of Political Theatre

"All theatre is political" (Itzin 1980: x; Patterson 2003: 1; Kritzer 2008: 1). In the context of British theatre, however, the term "political drama" denotes plays, which explicitly aim at changing the world or at least at challenging the status quo. Thus, the grand narrative about British political drama relies on three core dates: 1956, 1968, and 1979, the premiere of John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*, the Student Revolution, last, and worst, the beginning of Thatcherism. Recent studies add two more dates: 1990, the end of Communist regimes in Eastern Europe, the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the subsequent War on Terror. However, history is not a well-made play and British political drama did not emerge out of thin air in 1956. There already was a tradition of political drama associated with Bernard Shaw's plays, and, more importantly, with German theatre of the 1920's and 1930's (cf. Patterson 2003:1; Sierz 2007:206).

There is no doubt that an important current within contemporary British drama can be seen as renewing the dramatic techniques of political theatre. Such as Osborne, Anne Jellicoe, Arnold Wesker, John Arden, Bond, or David Storey as well as the major representatives of the second generation including authors like Edgar, Barker, Brenton, Trevor Griffith, David Hare, or Churchill, who were motivated by a critical stance towards the particular socio-political situation they were living and writing in.

Several of these playwrights belonged and belong to a working class environment, some were and are (as in the cases of Bond and Edgar) committed to everyday party politics; consequently, their plays can be considered an aesthetic instrument of promulgating certain political concerns (policies) including, for example, the threat of nuclear war, the inhumane bureaucracy of the welfare state, social injustice, the growing cleft between the city, the industrialized countryside, miners' problems and the oppression of women.

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<sup>22</sup> In Sibylle Baumbach, Birgit Neumann, Ansgar Nünning (eds) with Mirjam Horn and Jutta Wingarten (2011). *A History of British Drama. Genres- Developments-Models Interpretations*. Trier, WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier.

Although authors like Ravenhill or Sarah Kane share with these writers a deep depreciation of what they see as the outdated conventions of the well-made play, the political agenda of plays like *Blasted*, *Phaedra's Love*, *Cleansed*, as well as *Shopping and Fucking*, *Citizenship*, *Pool (No Water)*, *Shoot/Get Treasure/ Repeat* is situated on an entirely different level. Roughly speaking we can say that Ravenhill and Kane produce test cases of political de-legitimation and re-legitimation.

### **2.6.2 The Label "In-yer-face Theatre" and the New Writing in 1990's**

"In-yer-face theatre" covers a good range of other writers such as (Jez Butterworth, Patrick Marber, Martin McDonagh, Rebecca Pritchard, Ravenhill and many more). These voices are characterized by their emotional ferocity (whose result is horror in a small room), by a youthful outburst, with its predictable cynism about the older generation and specially rebellion against authority. Sierz also claims in his influential book, that the 1990s witnessed the most exciting wave of new drama since the Angry Young Men almost half a century before (Sierz, 2001a: xi), and that Kane stands out as one of the most important playwrights of that decade. More than twelve years after her death, her plays are still widely performed around the world. Therefore and after the previous analyses, it can be said that Kane is part of what Sierz calls -"In-yer-face theatre"-or a doubtful Post- Political Theatre according to Lüdeke.

Sierz has also given a name for all these authors "Thatcher's children."<sup>23</sup> Benedict Nightingale, in his book *The Future of Theatre* (1998), summarized the main themes and concerns of this new generation of dramatists:

Their characters drifted around weird cityscapes, where violence was a frequent threat and escape, from feelings of entrapment mostly and illusion. But unlike their predecessors, these dramatists had no obvious ideology, no political credo, and no social agenda. If their characters launched into generalization, it was more likely to be about drugs or drink than the sins of the establishment. They observed the urban British quizzically, reported the contradiction they saw, and left the audience to reach its own conclusions. (Quoted in Saunders: 2002, 125)

Thatcher's children do not represent a coherent movement. Like the work of the "Angry Young Men" of the late 1950s, their plays demonstrate too wide a range of theatrical

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<sup>23</sup> Brown, Stephen. "The Angry Brigade." *Observer*, 6/5/2001.

styles and methods to have a unified project. Yet, they share many central political and aesthetic concerns. Foremost, these writers, a generation raised under eleven years of hard-line Thatcher's rule, were dominated by disillusionment with political alternatives and led to the media's indifference to intervene in the atrocities occurring very near.

According to Sierz (2004, 51-52-53) there are several labels attached to the new writing of the 1990s):

1. NEO-JACOBANISM
2. NEW-BRUTALISM
3. BLOOD AND SPERM GENERATION
4. THEATRE OF URBAN ENNUI
5. COOL DRAMA
6. IN-YER-FACE THEATRE

But all these labels except "In-yer-face theatre" are unsatisfactory because they describe only superficial aspects on the new plays of the 1990s (2004, 53). Unlike names such as "Blood and Sperm Generation," "In-yer-face theatre" describes not just the content of a play but the relationship between the writer and the audience, or (more accurately) the relationship between the stage and the audience. "In-yer-face theatre" describes not only a play's content but also the way in which this content is realised in practical terms in the theatre. These practical terms include theoretical ideas about experiential theatre with its idea of writing "kick-ass dramas" (Ibid) for small theatre spaces. It also raised the question of what is taboo and the notion of what is theatrical provocation. Sierz gives a precise description of this term "In-yer-face theatre" in the following lines:

This term strongly suggests what is particular about the experience of going to a studio theatre and seeing an intense piece of drama- the feeling that your personal space is threatened. It gives a sense of that violation of intimacy that some forms of extreme drama produce in the audience. In other words, it is a tool with which to understand the relationship between play and audience. It also describes the way in which 1990s British drama both extended the code of what acceptable on stage and tried to find new ways of communicating this to new audiences. (Quoted in Saunders: 2002, 125)

"In-yer-face theatre" does not mean that every new play in the 1990s was "in-yer-face," it means that the most innovative new writing of the 1990s, has a distinctive "in-yer-

face" sensibility, because "in-yer-face theatre" is a sensibility, not a movement or a school. What is more, this sensibility does not mean necessarily explicit acts of sex and violence, it means especially extreme emotions.

Linked with this new sensibility, a crisis of masculinity has to be mentioned as a central theme in much 1990s new writing. However, although Kane's work shares aspects of this theme, her treatment of diseased masculinity is strongly different. The sexual politics in Kane's drama often revolve around women, playing out intensely masochistic relationships to nihilistic, self-loathing male protagonists. Therefore, men in Kane's plays move often between intense expressions of love and hard aggression towards the women trapped by them.

Concluding and according again to Sierz, the idea of "'in-yer-face theatre" has also been recognised by many theatre practitioners." (Sierz: 2004, 54)

Yet, ambiguities and paradoxes characterise Kane and her work. Are the plays autobiographical or universal? Is Sarah Kane a late modernist, a postmodernist or a post-humanist? Does her work fit into a feminist aesthetics, or does it refuse any of these labels? Some critics regard Kane as a political writer, which others see the work as essential amoral and nihilist.

Moreover, whilst she was heralded as an important representative of "Cool Britannia" in the mid-1990s, alongside other writers including Jez Butterworth, Martin McDonagh, Mark Ravenhill, Joe Penhall, Rebecca Prichard and Judy Upton, Kane's inclusion within this grouping is debatable.<sup>24</sup> Is she really prototypical of so-called "in-yer-face" drama, and its territory of social realism or is she, on the other hand, its superlative figure, through the preoccupation in her first three plays for depicting graphic scenes of sex and violence onstage? Furthermore, her work also displays a reluctant answer, shared by her contemporaries, to guide audiences to any conclusive moral or political certainties.

Together with the dramatists Upton and Ravenhill, Kane also shared a preoccupation with staging acts of extreme violence and sexuality. However, it differs significantly from Butterworth's *Mojo* that premiered the same year as *Blasted*, because the gruesome acts of staged violence in *Mojo* set out to deliberately amuse and entertain its audiences whereas in *Blasted*, violence was used to carefully build up a number of connections between the causes of domestic sexual violence eventually culminating in the violence of warfare. If Ravenhill's characters question whether human subjectivity is real or induced through drugs and

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<sup>24</sup> To label the work of an author is something debatable and not the topic of this thesis.

consumerist culture, Kane's characters often have a romantic sensibility predicated on emotional excess. While Kane and Ravenhill do converge via an exploration of themes of sexual abuse, the search for love and a shared concern with the characters who self-mutilate, Kane's drama concentrates on existential question, such as the loss of religious faith, the nature and causes of violence and the effects of a nihilistic sensibility. The difficulty in attempting to assess Kane's reputation is further complicated by the claims made not just for her importance within a specific "school" of playwriting in the 1990s but also within a wider tradition of post-war British drama. However, *Blasted* never made inroads into public consciousness, nor did it refashion the style and content of British cone, and television in the same way as *Look Back in Anger* (by John Osborne) did. Besides, according to Graham Saunders in *About Kane: the Playwright and her work*, on page 7 he says: "Kane's work did not alter the prevailing dramatic form of social realism that still dominates British playwriting today."

In some aspects, also according to Saunders (ibid), Kane seemed actively to remove herself from any association or tradition of women dramatists to have emerged since 1956. In addition, she had her own refusal to be categorised herself as a woman dramatist, or recognised that her plays explored issues directly related to sexual politics.

There are and there will be problems in reaching a consensus or understanding of Kane's work. Furthermore, there is a danger of considering her work as part of inevitable associations of mental health. In general, Kane's plays always followed a dogmatic personal vision that had little to do with the explicit concerns of 1990s Britain. However, Kane has become the dramatist of that decade, marginalising other important writers because of the idolatry surrounding her after her death (suicide) and mainly because she shows a more reminiscent imagery drawn from renaissance drama or the work of Samuel Beckett, as for example, when the blinded Ian occupies an infant's grave in *Blasted*.

### **2.6.3 Conclusions on Political Drama, "In-her-face Theatre" and Further Developments in Contemporary British Drama**

British theatre survived Thatcherism and the Premiership of Tony Blair, but it could not change the world. After the Fall of the Wall and the end of the Cold War, it no longer attempted to do so either. As literary agent, Mel Kenyon, puts it: "To write these big political plays full of certainties and resolution is completely nonsensical in a time of fragmentation.



When you want to create a political piece of drama, there's no point in mimicking the form of resolution and certainty in a time of complete uncertainty" (qtd. from Saunders 2008:20). Hence, established writers forego clear-cut political messages. Churchill's *Mad Forrest* (1990), Brenton's *Berlin Bertie* (1992), and Edgar's *Pentecost* (1994) emphasize the instability and insecurity of the situation after the regime changes in Europe. For a while, Hare turned towards realist psychological drama (e.g. *Skylight* [1995] or *Amy's View* [1997]) in which the political becomes the private; Churchill engaged with postdramatic forms which represented the *status quo* as an eerie and surreal nightmare (e.g., dystopian *Far Away* [2000] (cf. Sierz 2007: 208).

The new generation of post-Thatcher dramatists foregrounded uncertainties and violence. Although critical of the *status quo*, Ravenhill's *Shopping and Fucking* (1996) or Kane's *Blasted* (1995) no longer assumed to know the solutions - as Bond had done in his foreword to *Saved* -, nor did they offer grand narratives about the metamorphoses of socialist ideas in the vein of Edgar's *Maydays*. Instead they offer, "little stories" based on "personal pain rather than public politics" (Sierz qtd. from Saunders 2008:5), full of deconstructions of meaning and "in-yer-face"<sup>25</sup> violence (cf. Saunders, 2008: 3).

Dramatists became more overtly political again at the end of the 20th century. Brenton and Tariq Ali's *Ugly Rumours* (1998) and Alistair Beaton's *Feelgood* (2001) satirized New Labour as Thatcherism with spin (cf. Tönnies 2003). Verbatim plays based on interviews, newspapers reports, and political documents critically dealt with the politics of Blair's government in both domestic (cf. Hare's *The Permanent Way*, [2003] and international affairs. After 9/11 and Britain's support for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, playwrights took an explicitly oppositional stance emphasizing, "politics matters because politics kills" (Edgar 2010:n.pag.). This was discernible in Harold Pinter's 2005 Nobel Prize speech as well as in Hare's *Stuff Happens* (2004), Robin Soans' *Talking to Terrorists* (2005), or Victoria Britain and Gillian Sloveo's *Guantanamo* (2004).

While verbatim theatre lost steam, the critical political attitude continues at the end of the decade, invigorated by the global economic crisis and Britain's ongoing search for a national identity. Brenton's *Never Had It So Good* (2008) once again returns to history to examine the gestation of 1950's affluence. Hare's *The Power of Yes* (2009) and Lucy Pebble's

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<sup>25</sup> It is important to comment that Sierz declared at a theatre conference in Bristol in 2002, that the "In-yer-face Theatre" movement had ended. Then, this movement was an undoubtedly vibrant useful account of a particular phenomenon. Especially of plays, as they first were performed and received, but it was quite narrowly focused in London theatre context and necessarily excluded writers.

*Enron* (2009) analyse the pitfalls of a globalized economy. Butterworth's *Jerusalem* (2009) confronts the audience with an energetic drug dealer at the centre of a multi-layered portrait of England between Morris dancing. In an article for the Guardian published in February 2010, Edgar announces yet another new wave of political playwrights which are about to change the world. Again.

### **2.6.3.1 Evasion or Engagement of the New Drama of the 1990s**

The augmentation of the contradictory and problematic phenomena of postmodernity and globalisation is the defining feature of the context in which the new drama of the 1990's emerged. As a direct result of these forces, the UK and Ireland are contiguous and interconnected that at any other time in the twentieth century. Simultaneously, accelerated technological, political and economic change has destabilised senses of value, identity and distance in ways that are reflected by the new drama.

The ambivalence of such an altered context is for many critics manifest in the allegedly questionable energies of the decade's theatre. Thus, one of the main criticisms of 1990s new playwriting has been its failure "to engage with significant public issues," where form is privileged over content, or that superficiality takes precedence over depth.<sup>26</sup> Yet such criticism must be modulated if one looks beyond the popularised and provocative hub of the "in-yer-face" sensibility. The "new aesthetic" was, according to Aleks Sierz, typified by "experiential confrontation," shock effects and lack of moral closure. Nonetheless, relationships between such a "new aesthetic" and its theatrical and theoretical predecessors, signal its fundamentally intertextual, even recursive, nature. As Piet Dufraeye remarks:

It is ironic that the question as to how theatre codes have recently been extended bears a millennial urgency to it, harkening back to the radical changes of theatre around the previous millennial turnover in the early years of the twentieth century. (79)

Time and again "provocative theatre sets up a complicitous dynamic between stage and audience" (Dufraeye, 94) that all too easily topples over into superficiality and is subject to early exhaustion of effect. Undeniably, provocation is a dimension to the dramaturgies of some, but clearly not all, of the playwrights discussed here; rather, as the novelty of the

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<sup>26</sup> Gottfried, Vera. "Lukerwarm Britannia," *Theatre in a Cool Climate*, eds. Vera Gottfried and Colin Chambers (Oxford: Amber Lane, 1999) pp. 212.

1990s wears off, it is evident that such a sensibility is a part of a much more extensive and intricate web of cultural and dramatic negotiations of postmodern conditions in the final decade of the century and, continue beyond it. These conditions, as has been argued variously by theorists cited in this work, involve the erosion of dissolution of particular social and political values, the advance of globalisation and the reconfiguration of the local, and a crisis not only of representation, but also of ethics. Consequently, they solicit new perspectives on the affinities and associations, influences and objectives to be found in contemporary drama and, in particular, among the new generation of playwrights who appeared in the 1990s.

Attempting to map a concept of postmodernism, Ihab Hassan refers to

a number of related cultural tendencies, a constellation of values, a repertoire of procedures and attitudes. (147)

Among an extremely heterogeneous list of philosophers, historians, literary theorists, architects, artists, writers and musicians. No school, movement, or paradigm can adequately comprehend all the elements that have contributed to notions of the postmodern. Similarly, the creative diversity of 1990s drama precludes interpretation in terms of a single paradigm, school or movement. Rather Hassan's "constellation" model provides a means by which the attitudes, values and practices of the playwrights in focus here might be analysed in relation to the received discourses of postmodernity. The range of their dramatic practices reflects the contradictoriness of responses to postmodern conditions- both thematically and formally, their procedures and attitudes hinge upon citation and intertextuality; narrative ambiguity and fragmentation; performative identities; and, to a lesser degree, spectacle. Greig explores the contentious spaces of modernity and postmodernity, where interconnectedness persists even when communication seems impossible. Ravenhill's work scrapes at the surface of contemporary political and moral disorientation. McDonagh engages in a frenetically provocative production of fictionalised local identities. Kane's work attempts to cut through to some absolute core of intensity in order to assuage ontological uncertainty, while a similar concern seems to generate both Marina Carr's equivocal reinscription of destiny and Conor McPherson's ambivalent performative narrative. Clearly traceable are a panoply of ludic, traumatic and violent strategies that highlight ontological uncertainty or the construct (or constructedness) of identity and which are allied to a strong focus upon minor, personal and

fracture narratives. In addition, questions concerning the true or the authentic repeatedly resurface alongside a propensity to self-conscious textuality and, at times, ironic intertextuality.

That said, the work of these six writers is not simply commensurate with the radical disruptions of theatre-as-representation attempted by postmodern, or postdramatic theatre-as discussed by Johannes Birringer, Fuchs, Marvin Carlson or Hans-Thies Lehmann, among others. Neither the posthuman nor the postdramatic have been (fully) processed by such theatre, though at times they may be ephemerally perceptible. Notably, the convention of the fourth wall often remains unchallenged. The play-as-text, and as intertext is also preserved. Although Kane tends toward the dissolution of character in her final plays, character is generally maintained, if tested and distorted, throughout the remaining work considered here. What is perhaps most striking is how perception and the construction of narrative are presented and this becomes the play's ambivalent message, displacing unambiguous moral or political points. Ultimately, the new drama of the 1990s - as exemplified by the plays of Carr, Kane, Greig, Ravenhill, McPherson and McDonagh- is marked less by revolutionary transformations of form or explicit politics, than by the critical potential of ethical ambivalence, performative story-telling and stylistic appropriation that involves both evasion and engagement.



#### **IV. PURE NARRATIO:**

**Different Interpretations of Violence in Kane's Plays**



I believe, and without doubt believed during the period I was writing *Blasted*, that violence is the most urgent problem we have as a species, and the most urgent thing we need to confront. Personally, I say there is nothing better to write about. I don't like violent films, that's true, and I don't like violent scenes; and the reason I don't like violence is when I happen to see *Reservoir Dogs*, *Pulp Fiction* or other films of that type I feel like using violence, and it's like music that's played when you're cutting off an ear. You are in a state of extreme suffering; it is not possible you can like it for the music.<sup>27</sup>

I was violent for the first time when I was eight years old, and I can never forget the feeling that it produced in me. Yet, very often, when suggestions of violent acts are on the news, or I see violent films, those feelings are not completely subdued. The scale of emotions that become stimulated are completely different and often can escalate.

People have often asked me if it's really necessary to bring the things I have into a scene, and many journalists in particular have said: "We know that these things happen, why do we need to see them?" And I believe that the answer is that we need to see the things we already know happen, but to see them presented in a different way and so will understand them better. (Giammarco, 1997)

## 1. Power, Sexuality and Violence.

Sexuality is not a property of bodies. (Teresa de Lauretis, 243)

As Kane was a feminist<sup>28</sup> before going on with the facts of violence in her plays, I have considered it very important to analyse these aspects as a base for the understanding of the following items.

There are linkages among violence, sexuality and power. Power and violence, though they are distinct phenomena, usually appear together. Wherever they are combined, power is the primary and predominant factor. However, violence can always destroy power. Power and violence are opposites; where one rules absolutely, the other is absent. Violence appears when power is in jeopardy, but left to its own course it ends in the disappearance of power.

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<sup>27</sup> Kane is referring here to an infamous scene in Quentin Tarantino's film *Reservoir Dogs* (1992) where a police officer is tortured and murdered. During the scene, his ear is shaved with razor to the song "*Stuck in the Middle With You*" by Stealers Wheel that is playing on the wireless throughout the torture scene.

<sup>28</sup> As said by Professor and playwright Edgar in an interview on 20th November 2008. He insisted that this aspect was one of the most important in Kane's plays analyses. He defined her as feminist and political lesbian. The interview took place at New St. Station in Birmingham, in a coffee shop. Then we went to his house as he gave me an article about Kane and his wife, Eve Edgar. Both died the same day under different circumstances. Mrs Edgar had fought strongly for the creation of grants for students at Birmingham University and died of cancer. Their house, the play where we had part of the interview had been the house of the writer George Elliot, now an area of Arabs and Pakis. Mr Edgar is famous in England, apart of being a professor and a playwright; he is also famous for his defence of rights in favour of Islamists in opposition of the rejection they suffer in Great Britain.



Violence is utterly incapable of creating power but it cannot be derived from its opposite, which is power. Violence often springs from rage. Rage can indeed be irrational and pathological, but so can every other human effect. It is no doubt possible to create conditions under which men are dehumanized – such as concentration camps, torture, famine – but it does not mean that they become animal-like; and under such conditions, not rage and violence, but their conspicuous absence is the clearest sign of dehumanization. Rage is by no means a reaction to misery and suffering as such; no one reacts with rage to an incurable disease or to an earthquake or, for that matter, to social conditions that seem to be unchangeable. Only where there is reason that conditions could be changed and are not, rage arises. Only when our sense of justice is offended do we react with rage, and this reaction by no means necessarily reflects personal injury, as is demonstrated by the whole history of revolution, where invariably members of the upper classes started and then led the rebellions of the oppressed and downtrodden.

Our construction and preoccupation with violence and its consequences are of recent origin but there was a time when violence was not considered the central ingredient of crime, a time when the state legitimated by its violence was a time when violent acts were attributed to God's righteousness. Thus, only a few decades ago, the term "family violence" would have had no meaning:

- child abuse ( *4.48 Psychosis, Crave...* )
- wife beating ( " )
- and must ( *Cleansed* )

These would have been understood but not recognized as serious social problems. Thus, for Winy Breines and Linda Gordon, violence between intimates must be seen in the wider context of social power relations. (Teresa de Laurentis, 1989: 243).

The seeds of violence are contained in our society, but not only those who transgress the legal boundaries of society seemed a threat. Hanging, branding, flogging, the pillory, drawing and quartering, burning alive – all were accepted as legitimate forms of punishment or violence. The violence of punishment was a language employed by Authority to write the canon of justice. The most extreme form of violence is intolerance, the non-acceptance of selfhood. Out of this grows envy. What is more, envy is one of the most accepted hidden emotional weapons against humanity. It is an established illness, whose cure, is far away. Envy dresses humans and although it is an illness unfortunately we can live with it. Violence is invariably associated with an earlier, more primitive level of society, where the emotion of

envy is stuck to one's life and justifies the existence of violence in English civilization -or in any society-. Envy, however, is not the object of this study.

There is a familiar myth that is sometimes, and wrongly, used to explain the origins of human sexual arrangements. This is the myth of the primal horde, the primal crime, in which the patriarch keeps all the woman to himself and forces his sons to work for him; finally, the sons rob, kill and attack him. Rape the women, and then, guilt-ridden, promise to be good boys. In this myth, women participate by means of their subordination, because they are physically intimidated, although this subordination occurs in unavoidable moments of resistance. Thus, the victims, (the women) turned into victim-given in the patriarchy.

Patriarchy is both a psychological- ideological and a political-economic system. Patriarchy is, first and last, a system of domination. However, it differs from other systems of domination, be they racism, class, structure, or colonialism, because it goes directly for the jugular of social relatedness and psychological integration: namely, desire. Patriarchy attracts desire. It is, first and last, a system of domination. In fact, all of us are reared and nurtured as symbols of desire, but at the same time, we are rooted in the repression of desire. This is essential to sexual oppression, where patriarchy is present. The sources of power over us are represented in the control of sexuality and desire. Any act of oppression, or control by means of oppression is violence. What is more, violence is the unvoiced form of communication that motivates terrorism, and it is praised by terrorists as a manifestation of the justice force.

## **2. Violence in Kane**

In Kane's plays, it can be admitted that:

Violence is by nature instrumental. It always stands in need of guidance and justification through the end it pursues. (Arent, 51).

Thus, her use of violence can be justifiable, but it never will be legitimate.

Violence, being instrumental by nature, is rational to the extent that it is effective in reaching the end that must justify it. Therefore, violence can remain only if it pursues short-term goals, as in the performance or a play in a theatre.

As we have seen in the previous item, violence is a sign of power and its origin is similar in all violence whether that origin is located in the individual or in an abstract. Thus, the dominant representation of violence could be, a "breakdown in social order" or "a

breakdown in self-hood." Therefore, Kane's plays show a "sick society" by means of violent scenes but she does not safeguard the discovery of the culprits for this sickness. Kane does not provide testimony of an analysis of violence as the breakdown of social order or violence as the maintenance of a pattern of dominance. What she shows is the hegemony of the cultural key that determines what are the right and wrong ways to be a human being. Besides, she adds the idea of violence as representation, which is not easy for most academics to accept, at least in England and in her time.<sup>29</sup> Due to the catalogue of brutal images and events contained in *Blasted*, *Phaedra's Love* and *Cleansed* contain, as the above descriptions illustrate, they are impossible to ignore, critically circumnavigate or omit. The plays draw heavily on a storehouse of taboos:

- Incest.
- Cannibalism.
- Sexual violence.
- Dismemberment.
- Mutilation.
- Suicide and Murder.

Kane's work can be said to emerge from a contemporary crisis. A destabilized self is represented in this world of spectacle and simulacra. Thus, the reader, but mainly the spectator, may find Kane's plays shocking because of their violence. However, the audience must wonder what their meaning is and what message the author wants to transmit. The reason why some may feel uneasy watching Kane's plays is that by putting violence on stage, Kane makes the audience realise that violence is inside everyone. Therefore, Kane's theatre focuses on the proximity of violence, but according to Clare Wallace "she denies any interest in glamorising violence" (Wallace, 193).

Kane's use of violence in *Blasted*, *Phaedra's Love* and *Cleansed* goes beyond the adjectival relation of violence to spectacle. Her work depicts a deliberate, political conflation of "everyday" violation coupled with violation on a grand scale. Violation in Kane is not

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<sup>29</sup> (For example, according to professor Bernard Reitz at 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference of the German Society for Contemporary Theatre and Drama in English (CDE) 7-10 June 2012 in Katholische Akademie Die Wolfsburg Mülheim/ Ruhr. He commented it to me, while having a coffee during a break at the Annual Conference).

anchored solely in the everyday, nor solely in the horizon of history because this violence is able to mean afresh.

Throughout all her plays, Kane uses cruelty for her discussion of the human condition and human relationships, as she is clearly fascinated and at the same time repelled by the omnipresence of violence in human existence. However, what she does is to circumscribe the violent act of birth and the cruelty of death. Kane offers love modalities of violence. In addition, she shows violence in different concepts of social order.

Violence is also a social fact. There is no need to show physical violence, to show that there is violence, because violence exists in language. We cannot understand what makes one person harm another. We draw away from the perpetrators and normally the violent act sets them outside of society, not just morally but beyond our understanding as well. However, our identity seems to be in doubt when we become aware of a neighbour's violence, or that of the Police. Thus, this boundary, once seemingly so secure begins to erode. In this way, I wish to explore a chapter of violence. Not to rewrite a new criminal law, but to explore a way in which the frequent spectacle of violence, of blood that tends to harden the hearts and corrupt the nature of people, fitting them for the most atrocious acts, leads to a hidden *quantum* of solace, just as Kane probably desired, whose consequence was to reject violence in favour of theatre and poetry in the name of humanity.

## **2.1 Chronicles of Suffering: Kane's Plays**

El principal problema que se plantea al intelectual de hoy, procede no de las controversias escolásticas, sino del sufrimiento humano. (Todorov, 39)

The assessment of suffering is one of the main goals of this research. My concern for victims is not simply a "fashion" it is rather a sign of a human society that places the issue of suffering at the heart of its common concerns. The events of the twentieth century, which have indeed become, as Lenin (and others predicted) a century of wars and revolutions, provoked my reflections on violence on coming into contact with Kane's plays. Thus, having violence as the common denominator for the last century and this new century, my intention in the study of violence in Kane is to bring it to public attention but not only as an open invitation towards the topic in itself, but also with the focus that after devastation, an ethics of solace can exist between wounded bodies and minds. However, this does not mean that

Kane's theatre offers solutions or redemptions. What she offers is the most brutalised moments turned into the most human by means of her poetic discourse on stage and other theatrical devices.

If I have chosen the topic of violence, it is because I would like to decipher the quality of inner life in the characters Kane has created. The presence or absence of violence becomes the standard by which a government and civilization are judged. Cruelty evidences an insensitive tolerance towards human suffering that connects us directly to our barbaric ancestors where philanthropy is displaced by violence, by the destructive emotion of envy.

Violence does not promote causes, neither history nor revolution, neither progress nor reaction. Even Marx and others, who were aware of the role of violence in history in the emergence of a new society, considered its role secondary. Nevertheless, violence has, in itself, a particular attraction; although not many critics have admitted it, violence itself exercises a particular attraction for them. Thus, what we have in most studies is the denial of the effect of the plays or the paintings, focused on studies that seem to be temporarily narcotized avoiding the effects that certain works of art produce on them. Such is the case with Kane's plays or Francis Bacon's painting, which touch deeper the viewers at a level, but the study of this effect is avoided.

Watching a play of Kane hurts. It causes pain. This part of the study is an attempt to reflect these aspects that hurt so deeply. Her works are about violence, torment, fragmentation, loss, just as Bacon's paintings are. Thus, both works (Kane's and Bacon's) are discussed in terms of existential themes. It is the violence done to the viewer that demands to be examined if we want to understand how these works function (thus the compulsory necessity of watching all her plays several times, not just reading them). Both artists hit the nervous system, not only of the viewer, but also of Western culture. Both show the violence of naked life. The idea of mirroring is also present in both artists. However, this mirror reflects the eye that dissolves, that destroys, and unmakes the object of looking. Therefore, violence in the works of art and the effect they provoke on us is one of my aims in this research.

## **2.2 Before *Blasted*: the Monologues**

Violence in *Kane* is a creature of its own time and place. Thus, it is important to analyse three monologues written when she was at Bristol University. These three monologues contain the seeds for the rest of her plays.

The monologues are not widely known and have not been published. Indeed, in the last year of her life, Kane asked friends to return copies of the manuscripts and made it clear that she did not want them performed or printed. Perhaps she considered them juvenilia; perhaps she felt they were too personal, or too provisional. However, the monologues introduce concerns and theatrical ideas that would animate her throughout her work, and contain specific moments that she would later revisit to much greater effect, principally in *Crave*.

These three monologues are gathered in a single typescript entitled:

*Sick: Three Monologues by Sarah Kane.*

<b>SICK</b>	<i>Comic monologue</i>	About "rape"
	<i>What she said</i>	Bisexuality
	<i>Starved</i>	Eating disorders

Kane did not retrieve every copy of these pieces. During her final year at Bristol University, she gave copies of the three monologues to the University's Theatre Collection and does not appear to have asked for them back, with the happy result that researchers can still read them.<sup>30</sup> In the controlled theatrical environment of the monologue, they offer a

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<sup>30</sup> The holdings of these plays at the University of Bristol Theatre are as follows. There are two identical typescript copies of *Comic Monologue*, both bound, with the shelf numbers WTC/PS/OOO246/1, and WTC/PS/OOO246/2. There are three identical copies of *What She Said*, with the numbers WTC/PS/OOO247/1(loose-leaf), WTC/PS/OOO247/2 and WTC/PS/OOO247/3 (bound copies). They are two identical bound copies of *Sick* (which contains *Starved*). At WTC/PS/000245/1 and WTC/PS/OOO245/2. The version of *What She Said* has come small changes and additions to the text. All of the typescript have unnumbered pages. The Theatre Collection can be contacted at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/theatrecollecton>.

\*The individual texts are marked with Kane's third-year Bristol address:

Sarah Kane

unique insight into the prehistory of Kane's emergence as a major playwright; and, while there is much of interest in the monologues themselves, they also give a clear sense of the trajectory of her creative journey when she burst into public attention with the *succès de scandale* of *Blasted*.

## 1. *Comic Monologue*

This monologue describes an oral rape. The speaker, a woman, has been seeing a man, but the relationship has not become sexual. One evening at his place, he demands oral sex. She refuses but after a "violent struggle," he forces his penis into her mouth and ejaculates. Afterwards, he bathes her, dresses her and drives her home. At the end of the monologue, the speaker observes that rape is an ordeal from which there is no recovery. The text itself is composed of thirty-seven short paragraphs, the longest only seventy-three words.

The piece resembles Franca Rame's *Lo Stupro* (The Rape) (1975), the Italian actress's account of being kidnapped and gang-raped two years earlier by a group of neo-fascists, acting with the encouragement of the Carabinieri. But where Rame's monologue begins in confusion, growing to horror and revulsion, Kane's style is plain, measured and factual. Even when it is describing violent acts and emotions, it does so with unflinching clearness. Only towards the end does the speaker pull

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\*During mid September 2008, I was about a week in Bristol, thanks to a grant given by the Ministry of Education during 2008 to researchers. I stayed at "Burwalls Centre," a historic place in Bristol, college and place for lectures and studies, near the Clifton Suspension Bridge, an area close to the place Kane was living in her 3<sup>rd</sup> year Bristol. This area was and is considered a privileged area, although the origins of its richness were due to piracy during XVI century. The area is surrounded by river Avon. The days I stayed in Bristol I tried to visit the places she used to visit as the library of Arts and Social Sciences Library. Also some parks and pubs where supposedly she stayed.

\*I read the three monologues at the Theatre Collection in Bristol University these days: 18<sup>th</sup> September 2008 1<sup>st</sup> reading of *What She Said* and I took notes an "direct quotations" from the text on my note book. 2<sup>nd</sup> reading of *Comic Monologue* and I took notes "direct quotations" from the text on my note book. 3<sup>rd</sup> reading of *Starved* and I took notes "direct quotations" from the text on my note book. Then I had an interview with Professor Simon Jones (although we had met before in order to allow me to enter to the Theatre Collection. He teaches theatre studies at Bristol University. He was one of Kane's teachers at Bristol. He defined her as very brilliant but very aggressive. Also as feminist. 19<sup>th</sup> September 2008 2<sup>nd</sup> reading of *What She Said* at the Theatre Collection, and I took more quotations from the text on my notebook. Therefore, they are my own transcriptions.

focus to address the traumatic aftermath of the assault and offers moral condemnation of the act. (Rabellato, 31)<sup>31</sup>

The economy of the writing perhaps also serves to suggest annihilation of the speaker's sense of self in that violation, an effect emphasised by the fact that the man is named as "Kevin" while the speaker remains only "WOMAN."<sup>32</sup>

Kevin's penis hardening and softening over again, which is described during the stalemate phase of violence, is an original and inventive way of marking the passage of time, and prefigures scene five of *Blasted*, which gives us snapshots of Ian's degradation through time. Also the events from present to past and the onset of post-traumatic shock (59-60).

The effect of this text is very powerful in terms of truth and truthfulness, in fact the three monologues gather these terms. The text shows accuracy and sincerity, which in theatre acquires mysterious and metaphysical significance. The following are examples from my notebook gathered at the Theatre Collection in Bristol University to show this quality of sincerity in Kane's theatre<sup>33</sup>:

I was going out with this man. His name is Kevin.

I could see what he thought. That now he'd have me. That my resistance had to stop.

I stood up. This had gone too far. I said, 'I'm going home. '

He reached out and grabbed my arm. "You're fucking not." He swung me round backwards and tripped me. I was lashing out, but he trod on my hands and sat on me. Legs astride my head. He wasn't much bigger than me but I couldn't get free. I stopped struggling and looked in his eyes reasonably. I said, 'Kevin, please stop this.'

He smiled and said "Suck it."

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<sup>31</sup> Qtd. in *Sarah Kane in Context* (2010) Manchester University Press, edited by Laurens de Vos and Graham Saunders.

<sup>32</sup> WOMAN would also be the only name given to the speakers of *What She Said* and *Starved*. *Blasted* is the first play to give the speaking characters names, though from there the journey is back to the annihilated self: From Cate, a real name in *Blasted* to Hippolytus, a literary figure in *Phaedra's Love* to Tinker, stealing the name of the hostile critic in *Cleansed*, the Woman in *Cleansed* to A, a single letter in *Crave*, to no names at all in *4.48 Psychosis*.

<sup>33</sup> Although, Kane was not in favour of showing written parts from the monologues, as they are kept unpublished, the time I took them, I did not know her decision, so under my responsibility I have decided to show them, because they are the alive testimony of a writer as Kane and the proof of my research.



I stared at him. I knew that in a minute he was going to force me. Get my mouth open and make me.

At the same moment we burst into life. He was pushing his penis into my face, erect to the belly button, I was keeping my mouth firmly shut, kicking, wriggling, pushing with every muscle, with the strength I never knew I had, and I was terrified.

(First page,).

though I knew the morning brought defeat      (...)

He came in my mouth. Oral rape. A taste usually bound up with loving emotion was now repulsive, abhorrent. The tip of his penis was touching the back of my throat. I was sick. He took of my throat. I was sick. He took his penis out and slapped me round the head several times, hard.

(Second page)

I could taste sperm and vomit, and my hands were crashing onto the top of my head. I was sick again. He threw me down in disgust, like he was throwing away an old cloth. "Dyke". He spat. In my face.

(Third page)

I cleaned my teeth with six different toothbrushes, then threw them all away. I made myself sick in case some of his sperm was in my stomach. I didn't eat properly for over a year. Swallowing food was like swallowing him. I never went to the police. Kevin raped me orally. They'd raped me mentally.

(...) when I couldn't resist any more, I consented to my violation.

Sometimes, when I'm making love, I start to cry. Because what I'm offering isn't good enough. I'm soiled goods. I'm not worth the bother.

When you hear about a woman who's been raped "recovering Hospital", don't believe it. There is no recovery. and when you hear a judge say that rape is not great trauma, don't believe it. It's a lie. It's a trauma from which there is no recovery. There is no getting over it.

(Fourth page)

## 2. *What she said*

Kane's second monologue is twice the length of her first. The speaker is seeing a man called Howard, with whom she has an open relationship. For much of the play, she recounts a series of ideological debates with a feisty lesbian friend called Deb, who is scornful of the

speaker's proclaimed bisexuality and urges her to understand men's fundamental hatred of women. Her relationship with Deb continually promises to become sexual though this misfires badly on one occasion: trying to show how much more open lesbians can be about sex, Deb urges the protagonist to express what she really wants, when her response is to ask to be tied up, Deb is horrified and rejects her. At their next encounter, the speaker asserts her bisexuality more confidently and finally they make love, the speaker describing herself as deeply happy.

*What She Said* has a much stronger sense of character than *Comic Monologue*. Wisecracking, confident, infuriating Deb, the weak, passive Howard and, between them, the shy but emergent speaker are all vividly realised in places. Unlike the austere, precise *Comic Monologue*, this play brims with puns and allusions, mostly deriving from the cut-and-thrust of the speaker's banter with Deb. The language is also richer in its rhythms and vocabulary, with short sections recalling the incantatory style of Jim Cartwright's work. Lines are halting and incomplete, the layout itself contributing to the effect of the piece.

Because all three characters are voiced by a single narrator, there are moments of ambiguity, where it is unclear who is speaking. This may be evidence of a writer not yet in control of her craft, but it does, inadvertently perhaps, point to the permeable boundaries of gender that we find in Kane's later plays: the genital transplantation of *Cleansed*, the collective cross-gender chorus of *Crave*, the genderless, self-less semiotic flow of *4.48 Psychosis*. This gender-confused impression is confirmed when the (female) protagonist admits her inexperience with lesbian sex and wonders if the right way to ask for oral sex is to ask to be sucked off. The central character is outshadowed for much of the play by Deb, but even so intrigues with her alternation of savage masonry (as when she recalls winning money at a game of pool, joyful that she'd won it from a man) and wide-eyed idealism (as when she wonders why we build houses when we could live in trees).

The following are examples from my notebook taken at the Theatre Collection in Bristol University:

"For Alex" <sup>34</sup>

WOMAN

I smell my fingers and wonder where they've  
been.

The first woman I ever slept with was this really  
fat woman called Deb, bloody beautiful. She was

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<sup>34</sup> In the first page there is also a reference to Thatcher.

overweight in a really nice way and got light rings  
in one ear and "Fuck society" tattooed on her right  
temple. She did it when she was a kid cos she hated  
her Dad. Now she regrets it cos Thatcher said fuck  
society too. (...)

I am bisexual (...)

I said I love people not just  
one gender.

She said A man and a woman fucked and lived  
happily ever after.

(page: 1)

You are what you drink, what do you drink?

When men break our faces from pure hate you  
can't say it's got nothing to do with me.

... men are like that they follow their dicks not their  
heads. And women love them... “

Don't give me this.  
The number of people  
You've slept with,  
He said Before I met you.

(page: 2)

I said Why do we always have to give up our lives?  
He said I'm asking you to love me not die for me, I  
said same thing.

(page:3)

Some people, they don't have a sex drive. All that  
energy converts to cruelty, they destroy, that's all.

(page: 4)

.. all she had was a box of lies...

(...)

Why do we build boxes when we have trees?

It's not love. It[s not love at all.

(...)

(page: 5)

She said, It's really, it's what they  
want us to want, domination and pain

(page:7)

I said Maybe you could come and stay at  
Christmas, she said why would a radical lesbian  
feminist celebrate the birth of a man? I said  
Easter then.  
She said this in the end.

(page: 8)

I said  
when you've loved someone  
you never stop loving them.

(page: 9)

... She said there was a tender  
side to me most people don't see...

It was dead nice, being tender and soft with  
someone. Said it was the best sex she'd ever had.  
I've never slept with a woman before. I fell asleep  
blissfully happy.

(page: 10)<sup>35</sup>

### 3. *Starved*

In this monologue, there is a case of "anorexia nervosa." The woman makes an unconscious identification of her own female form with the grotesque body under conditions, which make this a negative, rather than a joyful and sensual identification.

The brutalised protagonist of *Comic Monologue* recalls that, after her violation, she did not eat properly for a year. As if taking its cue from that, *Starved* follows a teenage girl with a serious eating disorder as her weight drops to four stone and she is hospitalised, force-fed and returned to her family. These events unfold in a bleak social landscape of a warring, uncomprehending home and a school which is little more than a battleground for predatory sexual warfare. The monologue begins with the speaker recounting in minute detail all the food she eats and she vomits it up, like a bulimic Bridget Jones. As her weight diminishes, the piece's dramaturgical syntax disintegrates and the second half is fragmented, impressionistic and sometimes numbed with apparent horror at the brutality of the world.

The monologue is a great move forward in depth and complexity compared to the two earlier works. The language has rhythmic echoes of Beckett, in the narrator's frequent announcements that she feels, in a single word: "Better". Formally, the piece is rich and

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<sup>35</sup> My impressions when I read this monologue were the following: "I have been reading this text for less than one hour. It is fascinating. All this dirty language that gives us a slap on our faces and asks us to take off the mask...the English mask, the mask that all societies have... Here are the SEEDS. With a superficial reading it might be pornographic but it is revealing. Here Sarah Kane, herself, the original, the creative artist, with her own biography, her experiences, disguised or not, but here they are, here ... 18<sup>th</sup> September, 2008."

evocative, charting, through its own structural collapse, the terrified breakdown of a mind. This technique would be repeated, on a grand scale, in the sudden and decisive departure from narrative, spatial and temporal coherence after scene three of *Blasted*. Even more decisively, the fragmented, subjective style come into being but this breakdown would come to define the style of Kane's final two plays. Just as *What She Said* showed a marked development in the handling of character, *Starved* now paints a much more fully realised picture of a world, where the speaker replies that she thought this was the real world, and her private reaction is to be very sick indeed. "Sick," which was the title Kane gave to the three monologues, is here a floating signifier, whose meaning can be applied to the speaker's eating disorder, but also to the values of the world around her. She feels alive when she is half/dead, and when she is forcibly fattened up again, she feels dead. Indeed, what is for the first time fully worked out here is the inversion of values that the speaker experiences between her world and the world around her that we will see through the later plays. In *Crave*, M asks C if she has ever been hospitalised for "Anorexia. Bulimia"; "No" replies C (173). We might wish to take this exchange from that personal, almost private, play as an acknowledgement that *Starved* is the last thing Kane wrote before the plays which are generally accepted as her canon. This is a token of just how close she was to this work that the blunt irony of *Comic Monologue* and the theft of a song title by The Smiths for *What She Said* sound like nothing else in her work, whereas *Starved*, *Blasted*, *Cleansed* are all of a piece. When Kane embarked on writing *Blasted*, she was making the leap from monologue to dialogue.

Examples from the text:

A woman sits on stage. She is sick.

WOMAN

Better

... my father screamed Can't you live in the real world?  
I said what's the real  
I thought this was it...

Monday 9<sup>th</sup> September

Death feels like an option

(page :3)

Suck my cock, kiss my arse, show us your cunt.

(page: 5)

Privileges (...)

Having life

(7)

My father comes to see me, he says My beautiful daughter, my  
source of delight. But he delights more in his firstborn, his son.  
And I only want to die. They won't be barging the real me now  
Anyway.  
He leaves me a make-up kit, blushes and lipstick and eyeshadow.  
And I paint my face in bruises and cuts and blood and swellings.  
And on the mirror in deep red. UGLY. Be a woman, be a woman.  
FUCK YOU."

(7)

... I say I am not a victim, I am not a victim, whatever you think  
don't think that that's the mistake I made.

(8)

What have they done to me? What have they done to me?  
What have they done to me? What have they done to me?  
What have they done to me? What have they done to me?  
What have they done to me? What have they done to me?  
What have they done to me? What have they done to me?  
What have they done to me? What have they done to me?  
What have they done to me? What have they done to me?  
What have they done to me? What have they done to me?  
What have they done to me? What have they done to me?

Sick

Cured my body can't cure my soul

(9)

I missed you

Sick

Sick

Sick

Better

(last page)

Therefore, these three monologues indicate a number of ways in which they prefigure her later work. Thus, images of oral rape are also found in *Blasted*, *Phaedra's Love* and arguably *Crave* (31-2, 81,175). They mark the first appearance of a set of concerns that would continue to animate to her work right to the end.

### 2.2.1 Influences

From my point of view *Ficky Stingers* by Lewis influenced Kane (as I have admitted on foot-note number 18). She probably read it at Bristol and Birmingham or before. *Ficky Stingers* is a disturbing play taking the subject of rape with courage. It is a very short, sharp and truly shocking play, which relentlessly and unapologetically tears away at the prejudices surrounding the issue of rape. The raw, aggressive dialogue and graphic (but never pornographic) imagery reveals rape as the brutal and intolerable crime it is, even in the "best" of circumstances. This play was performed by the first time in 1986 at the Royal Court Theatre Upstairs. London.

In addition, I consider that Kane adapted for her Unpublished Monologues the name of the characters (i.e. Woman).<sup>36</sup>

Examples from the play:

Woman:

She says I was  
stupid to go to his room.

...

Woman:

If you cross a road without looking nobody blames the  
driver who hit you. In the same way it wasn't Terry's  
fault. I walked out in front of him. I am well known  
amongst the gossips for keeping my sex life infuriatingly  
secret. This is my just reward. (122)

Woman:

.... She says she's never known anyone so  
selfish in bed.

Woman 2:

It was almost like being raped. (123)

Woman:

My parents are out...  
... I know him....I went to his room in the middle  
of the night... I can't prove anything. Anyway,  
they'll say it was my own fault...(120)

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<sup>36</sup> This play was read by Kane probably when she was at High School because of the years it appeared, but I think it was read at university even at Birmingham. It is difficult to probe, but also I think she read it at the library. I was at Birmingham University Main Library in November 2008. In one of the dark wooden seats upstairs I had the feeling she had been there, just reading this play. This play is placed into the shelf that is next to the seat where I was sat. She could have been in the same position as I was. I think she was. The halo of a writer even if she/he is not there always remains. But this is impossible to demonstrate in real life, only in literature.

## 2.3 Violence in *Blasted*

*Blasted*'s emergence on a writing course is very significant; a course with Edgar at its head, an icon of a type of socialist aesthetic, developing a workable dramaturgy which Kane's play systematically violates on every level. This is a particularly vivid example of an Oedipal struggle at work, also evidence in *Cleansed* with its image of a campus presided over by an engineer of human souls, carrying a curious overtone of the very institutionalization of creativity which its promulgation necessitates. Her constant struggle with what she saw as the normative culture of the course, or university, or society and of the theatre or such, bore fruit in the rage of *Blasted* – here sex in all its dangerous pain is staged; here the tact of what was dubbed "political correctness" is gleefully broken; here masculinity re-enters the site in the wounded form of Ian, anatomized, even celebrated before being brutally punished; here the theatre of humanism and consensus is abandoned for ceaseless confrontation, in search of a hidden *quantum* of solace that will continue until her last play and which started in the unpublished monologues written at Bristol University.

*Blasted* can be understood in the context of four key areas:

1. Civil war in the Balkans during the 1990s.
2. Hooliganism. Home-grown violence 1980s-1995 (i.e. from Kane's formative years to the play's premiere).
3. In-Yer-Face and the BritPack.
4. Thatcher's children.

### 1. Civil War in the Balkans during the 1990s

In 1993, Kane was in the process of writing what was then "a play about two people in a room" when she saw an item about the attack on Srebrenica on the television news. Kane began searching for connections between rape in a Leeds hotel and the Bosnian civil war. "Suddenly the penny dropped" that "one is the seed and the other is the tree. I do think that the seeds of full-scale war can always be found in peace-time civilisation" (Saunders, 2002:39). In the 1990s Britain was very much a spectator upon war and terrorism – which were perceived to happen elsewhere, being beamed into British homes by the television news. Thus, the dominant mode of violence in the 1990s was in fact internal wars – conflicts



in the former Yugoslavia, inter-ethnic conflicts in the former Soviet Union, the first invasion of Chechnya and the horror of the Rwandan genocide. Violence for the West at least, was elsewhere, done to others by others.

A major conflict of the 1990s was civil war in the former Yugoslavia and it was news footage of this conflict to which *Blasted* responded to. It was then Kane responded to the Serbian attacks on the Bosnian city of Srebrenica in 1993 by changing the shape of the play she was writing. These attacks led to the United Nations Security Council declaring the city one of six "safe areas." Two years later, in July 1995, Serbian troops overran the city, NATO air strikes having failed to stop their advance. In seeking material to express the horrors of civil war, Kane looked not only to press reports about war rape and acts of torture in the Balkans, but also to equivalents in British culture – once again, reiterating the "seed and tree" scenario by drawing parallels that brought the apparently (and comfortably) distant violence very close to British experience.

## **2. Hooliganism**

In the action of the Soldier sucking out and biting Ian's eyes, Kane germinated a seed that had lodged in her mind after reading Bill Buford's *Among the Thugs* (1991). Buford, an American journalist, had joined a gang of English football hooligans during the mid-late 1980s. The episode is described in the book as follows:

He grabbed the policeman by his ears, lifted his head up to his own face and sucked on one of the policeman's eyes, lifting it out of the socket until he felt it pop behind his teeth. Then he bit it off. Harry rolled off the policeman, stood up and walked home. (Buford, 241)

Rampaging fans committing violent and criminal acts on match days, both in the UK and at away games in Europe, was a regular occurrence in the mid-late 1980s and 1990s. For some, 1980s football violence had provided a site for the expression of extreme right-wing politics, its perpetrators declaring allegiance to organizations such as the National Front "Combat 18". Thus, in *Blasted*, Ian's prejudice that characterizes all football supporters as hooligans is particularly vociferous. He clearly does not recognize aspects of their violence and bigotry within himself: "Tip that wog when brings up the sandwiches. (3)" or "Hate this city. Stinks. Wogs and Pakis taking over. (4)"

### 3. "In-yer face" and the BritPack

She become the reluctant figurehead of "in-yer-face," as *Blasted* was singled out "as a catalyst in restoring the fortunes of writing to the British stage" (Saunders, 200:4). A rapid assimilation into the lineage, Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* (1956), provided a convenient means of according landmark status. The critic Tom Seller comments thus:

Like John Osborne unleashing his belligerent Jimmy Porter onto the post-war British stage, Sarah Kane brings an explosive reality into our theatre that the larger culture would rather deny. Just as Osborne tapped into an angry national psyche of class resentment in the 1950s – and as Edward Bond made fierce characters and language speak for poverty and cruelty in the 1960s and 70s – Kane ventures into extremity, terror and social decay in the late 1990s. (1996: 29)

This lineage also served to locate Kane within the Royal Court's tradition of "angry young men." Elaine Aston observes, "apparently women are not supposed to write such violent plays" (2003: 79). One of the ways of dealing as an honorary male – a status that was consolidated further by the laddish identity of the so-called BritPack.

### 4. Thatcher's Children

Though the 1990s context is important in understanding the particular climate in which *Blasted* was produced and received, as the recognition of 1980s football hooliganism has begun to evidence, it is equally important to consider the formative influence of the 1970s and 1980s in shaping the experience and worldview of Kane and her peers: the generation dubbed "Thatcher's children." As we have seen Margaret Thatcher became Conservative Prime Minister in 1979 and remained in that position until her resignation in 1990.

The mid- 1980s through the early-1990s were years of direct action: of IRA terrorist attacks, regional race riots (including in Leeds, the setting of Kane's *Blasted*), protests against the Poll Tax – which replaced rate charges based on property value with a community charge based on the number of household occupants – against job lost in the print trade at Wapping and against amendments to the Criminal Justice Bill. Protest marches that begun with a carnival spirit all too often descended into violent clashes with the police.

One event that resonates for *Blasted*, and that acts as a reminder that terrorism was not unknown on UK soil as some of the early press reviews would have us believe, is the 1984 IRA bombing of the Grand Hotel, Brighton. This was an attempt, as it has been mentioned, to blow up Margaret Thatcher and her Cabinet during the Conservative Party Conference. Thus, the hotel in this play is blasted by a mortar bomb between scenes two and three.

### 2.3.1 Influences on the Violence in *Blasted*

It was Bill Burord's book on football hooliganism – *Among the Thugs* - that led Kane to *King Lear* partway into her writing process, as she worked on Ian's delirium through the construction of vivid theatrical images (Saunders, 2002:61), describing an incident of football violence that Kane drew upon directly, as it has been said on pages (116-17). Bruford proposed that the eye sucking exceeded "even Shakespeare in his own excesses; after all, Gloucester had his eyes pulled out by hand" (242).

Weller's *Mad*, which she saw at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, was a piece of devised and confessional theatre in which a group of performers, predominantly female, talked about their personal relationships, their experiences of clinical depression and the treatment they had received. The raw honesty of *Mad* – very much echoed in Kane's *Sick*- is present in the complex machinations of shifting vulnerabilities of Ian and Cate's relationship in the opening scenes of *Blasted*. Kane showed an early draft of this material to her friend Vincent O'Connell, upon whose recommendation she re-read Bond's *Saved* (see Sierz, 2001 a: 101). Although it was to the infamous baby-stoning scene in *Saved* that a number of critics and commentators referred to when confronted with the violence in *Blasted*, it should also be noted that Bond's play, like *Blasted*, begins with the sparring mating ritual of a couple - and it was, in fact, the sparseness and tautness of Bond's dialogue that inspired Kane when she began to edit. Like *King Lear*, *Saved* became influential to Kane partway through writing *Blasted*. She was later to describe Bond as her "major inspiration" (Saunders, 2002: 24).

Equally, the opening scenes of *Blasted* invoke Pinter's drama, showing the threat outside the room throwing into relief the individuals in conflict within it. They use stage properties and the character's engagement with their environment, employing the apparently "casual" realism of the stage properties to create symbolic "stations" within the plot (States, 1985: 67), in a manner akin to the naturalist strategies of Ibsen. These scenes also echo some of Ibsen's recurrent themes of disease on the body (*Ghost*, 1881), and in society, and the infantilization of women by a patriarchal society (*A Dolls House*, 1879; *Hedda Gabler*, 1890).

In common with Pinter, Cate and Ian's verbal sparring is minimal and rhythmic, with silences written into the script. Their half-explained relationship has an underlying sinister sexual charge; the air heavy with menace. This is often manifested in the liminal areas of the space – those that give access to the room. It is a strategy reminiscent of Pinter's *The Dumbwaiter* (1958), particularly through the tense humour of the door knocking sequence (*Blasted*, 2: 35-6).

Alongside the above dramatists, playwrights such as Churchill, Phyllis Nagy and Martin Crimp, in constantly reinventing form and looking to European traditions for ideas, provide theatrical guidance for Kane and those playwrights who have been aligned with her – rather than the epic pedagogic dramas of the 1970s and 1980s by writers such as Hare and Edgar (viz. Urban, 2001). To the list of the dramatists mentioned so far should be added Barker, whose *Arguments for a Theatre* (1993 [1989]) provided a very inspiring manifesto for drama students in the 1990s and who, along with Brenton and Peter Barnes, was, tagged a "New Jacobean" (Taylor, 1971: 24). Indeed, as an undergraduate student Kane had played the main role of "Bradshaw" in Barker's *Victory* (1983). In this play, Barker's habitual fascination with human behaviour in crisis situations, and particularly their aftermath, is expressed in Bradshaw's journey to gather the scattered remains of her husband who has been executed by supporters of Charles II. Here is a determination in the face of brutal opposition that is concordant with Cate's fortitude in *Blasted*.

Finally, we can see the influence of August Stramm's 1915 Expressionist play *Awakening* climaxes in the destruction of its hotel room set.

In conclusion, in addition to this analysis of violence in *Blasted*, we can add that the violence in this play is conceived as "aesthetic." In this sense, Sean Carney (2005, 275-96) argues that rather than it being a "shock effect," in fact the violence in *Blasted* is profoundly aestheticized. This aestheticism leads to a kind of solace because the tragic paradoxes present in the play allow something beautiful to emerge out of suffering and pain.

### **2.3.2 Sophisticated Atrocities in *Blasted*: Rape and War**

*Blasted*'s world of violence drags its meaning and plausibility from the systematized outrages of war where the violence is presented as a code without a key. Thus, *Blasted* is an incisive and effective response to contemporary international relations referred to as violent acts. It is a prophetic and somewhat ironic play. Thus, the increasing threat of terror post 9-11 and the suicide bombing on London transport in July 2005 were present in Kane's project

to address British myopia with her plays. The shock and awe that we receive the violence in *Blasted* are seen by some directors, such as the German director Thomas Ostermeier, as part of our reality "every day you perform it, it becomes more true"(Halliburton, 2006). *Blasted* directed by Ostermeier was staged in London at Barbican Theatre in November 2006 (7th-11th).<sup>37</sup> Ostermeier chose to focus audience attention upon this quality by including a plasma television in the set that is switched on intermittently by the characters during the first part of the play. The audience cannot see the screen but they hear snatches of newscasts making direct connections to Fullajah in Iraq and to unrest among Muslims, which seemed to have "emphasized Kane's anti-war message" (Sierz, 2006) and "was not mere factitious topicality" (Billington, 2005).

Therefore, *Blasted* has been said to be an account of civil war and its theatrical innovation comes from its radical structure, because the play is not conceived as a big political statement but as a personal account of a domestic rape. Thus, the idea of rape is central to Kane's vision of war. For example the Soldier connects rape and murder. He considers Ian a soldier.

### 2.3.3 Circle of Predation as Survival in *Blasted*

*Blasted* begins in "a very expensive hotel room in Leeds – the kind that is so expensive it could be anywhere in the world" (*Blasted*, 3) and it ends in a room somewhere in Bosnia, sometime during the war. Two characters, Ian and Cate, enter the room and eventually Cate falls prey to Ian in a night of sex and violence. Of course, she does not have to "fall" very far given her (albeit strained) relationship with Ian. It's clear from the start of the play that Ian is vulgar, racist and xenophobic, ultra/nationalist, sexually dangerous, violent and, broken. He carries a revolver, which he periodically loads and unloads, and aims at Cate while using her sexually. Cate is no innocent herself, in that she seems not entirely to reject Ian's sexual abuse, and in fact toys with him sexually after he has abused her. However, compared to Ian, this woman with her tender sympathies for her and mentally retarded brother, her vegetarianism, her horror at violence, her limitations with and her disabilities (Cate suffers from "fits") seem oddly out of place within him. Nevertheless, their relationship allows Ian, at least, the perfect opportunity for his violent self/exposition. The second half of the play shifts the context explosively from this room and the rape scene to the

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<sup>37</sup> On November 11th 2006, I attended a Symposium about Sarah Kane in London at the Barbican Centre. There I could see for the first time *Blasted*, directed by Ostermeier. It was in German with English subtitles.

war in Bosnia. A soldier enters, tells his story, and proceeds to victimize Ian, Cate having in the meantime escaped through the bathroom window.

The soldier and Ian have much in common. Just as Ian subjects Cate to his phallocentrism, understood both literally and metaphorically – that is, to his penis but also his gun, his patriarchal nationalism, his homophobic masculinity – Kane subjects Ian, via the soldier, to the even more frightening autism of world-rendering violence. Now Ian is rendered flexible, is opened, literally and metaphorically, so that the soldier can construct himself and his world in a horrific act of closure. Perhaps Cate provides Kane with a "feminine sensitivity" precisely in order to show, first, the mechanisms of stereotypical gender relations in a patriarchy they inhabit and, second, the very sexual violence and war mirror these same gender dynamics by exposing or positioning the weakness of victims in order to negate weakness, openness, and flexibility in the victimizer. When the wall of the hotel room is blown open by a mortar shell to mark the transition from a private instance of violence to the public violence of warfare, we understand that Ian himself has been ruptured, cracked open, along with the world he had been using Cate to build.

The soldier also carries within himself all the conflicts Kane has shown in the first scene between Ian and Cate. He has lost his beloved, a woman named Col, to rape, torture, mutilation and murder. The violence that took her from him is now his *modus operandi*, and he tells Ian of his horrific exploits while raping him and eating his eyes. Ian expects to be killed at any moment, and indeed, he seems to ask for death, but instead the soldier shoots himself in the head with Ian's gun. Ian, sodomized and blinded, left alone in the devastated room with a war raging outside, would likely have starved to death were it not for Cate's return in the last scenes. She has become the guardian of a baby a woman on the street gave her. The baby, however, dies. She is forced to prostitute herself for food. And she has, still, to put up with Ian's fragmented images of a pure and purely vile physicality – he defecates, masturbates, and cannibalizes the dead baby – until nothing, it would seem, is left, certainly not humanity, and apparently not even life. According to Kane's stage directions, Ian "dies with relief" (*Blasted*, 60) before play's end. However, his death is illusory somehow, for when Cate brings him some food he is alive again. The two of them share the meal and sit together in silence, until Ian says, simply "thank you" and the stage goes black. (*Blasted*, 61). Therefore, Cate and Ian, at the end of the play merely happen to survive. Ian's final "thank you" can be interpreted as an only vaguely softening of the blow of all that has come before. In addition, Cate in this process of survival becomes more like Ian –eating meat she would

not have touched earlier in the play, and gulping down his preferred poison, gin. This is a circle of predation where survival alone is not necessarily a ground for hope. However, as we will see in the following item, hope and solace in these plays depend upon violence, suffering, difficulty and pain.

#### **2.3.4 An analysis on Theology and Violence Versus *Blasted* Solace**

In Kane, violence and suffering have an ethical dimension. The hope to be found in *Blasted* depends upon violence and pain as I have said before. This is the most significant reason for which it is useful to discuss Kane's sense of hope in theological terms.

Those familiar with the "in-yer-face" "brutalism" of Sarah Kane, with her staging of graphic violence (at times out-Tarantino's in its sadomasochistic gore) will be surprised by the theological company Kane's theatre keeps; for it evokes a tradition reaching backwards from Jürgen Moltmann to Aquinas and ultimately to St. Paul. Even more surprising is the particular concern Kane shares with these Christian writers. While sin, or damnation, or Mel Gibson's passion for the martyr, for the sources of the Eucharist in flagellated flesh, might conceivably give shape to her work, really she is much more interested in hope as solace. The author of *Blasted*, *Cleansed* and *Phaedra's Love*, plays that scandalized reviewers and audiences alike with their gruesome depictions of rape, mutilation, cannibalism, war, and other forms of human degradation did not, apparently, conceive of her work in terms of despair only. What is more she uses St. Paul's<sup>38</sup> theological virtues (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians) to characterize her work in terms of "hope" (*Blasted*), faith (*Phaedra's Love*), and love (*Crave*)? Thus, her work can be understood in terms of semi-private religious issues: her realization that the force which should have acted as her eternal protection, that the force of salvation which had sustained her throughout a youth of religious zeal- namely, God – did not exist. The resulting "split" in her "personality and intellect between two kinds of consciousness – one of a very final mortality and the other of an expected salvation beyond death – works its way throughout her plays in the form of a relatively dark and ironic, but also comic, reflection on the theological concepts, such as hope and solace. What I would like to show here is that elements of a theology of hope from Kane's own Christian heritage provide a more adequate conceptual framework to understand the function of hope as solace in this play.

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<sup>38</sup> The allusion to St. Paul is probably more than a passing reference to a culturally significant paradigm, for Kane raised in an Evangelical household and was well versed in biblical language. Indeed, although she later turned to be atheist, her work evidences a consistent effort on her part to grapple with key motifs from her Christian upbringing.

Thomas Aquinas' formulation is that theological hope is hope in "arduous" good, something difficult, even supremely difficult to obtain, but not in the last analysis utterly impossible – is apt for a reading of Kane. (Aquinas, 295). In Calvin's commentary on Romans 8.24, Calvin insists that hope comes only via "the warfare of sufferance" and he even suggests that "it is expedient for us to labour in earth, to be oppressed, to mourn, to be afflicted, yea, to lie as it were half-dead, or like unto those that are dead" (Calvin, 221). Thus, hope is hope in salvation, in God's capacity to save the sinful soul and resurrect the dead.

Recent theologians also speak of a specifically Christian hope arising out of suffering, but in decidedly more ecumenical/philosophical language. Jürgen Moltmann, for instance, while using the vocabulary of salvation seems clearly to place the emphasis on overcoming of the suffering in this world. He writes that "the hope that is born of the cross and the resurrection transforms the negative, contradictory and torturing aspects of the world into terms of "not yet", and does not suffer them to end in 'nothing', " (Moltmann, 197). The basic thrust of his work is eschatological. In addition, hope itself, because it is eschatological, is a sign of the need for hope, is evidence of the inadequacy of the present, of the disaster of the world from which the future will rescue believing, hoping, humanity. Moreover, hope in the "God of promise" – the hope for "guidance, preservation, protection" etc. – takes form precisely as the imagined future negation of the actual "experience of depravations, of being abandoned to hunger, thirst, wretchedness and ... oppression" (Ibid, 130-31). For Moltmann, in fact, Pauline hope is considered as a radical break with the present, an also with any dreams of heaven; its future is "the future of the very earth on which the cross stands" as "the enemy of death and a world that puts up with death" (Ibid, 21).

Kane claimed that *Blasted* is hopeful, "fucking hopeful"<sup>39</sup> and, in evoking theological language that, that is, in characterizing a play about torture, warfare and gruesome, unrelenting suffering as hopeful, may have in mind a notion of hope analogous to, if not entirely identical with, the hope of this Christian tradition. The ironies of this conjunction of brutality and traditional Christian thought are remarkable. Or at least they appear to be. We would assume that in Kane, the hoped-for goal is certainly not the same one embraced by the theologians discussed above: salvation in resurrection. Yet Kane does make resurrection of a kind central to many of her plays. Take Ian's death and "resurrection" in *Blasted* for example.

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<sup>39</sup> Qtd. in Sierz, 120



The fact that he returns from his death when "it starts to rain on him,"<sup>40</sup> suggests a death and resurrection echoing the dying to death and rising to life in baptism.<sup>41</sup> Ian's final "thank you," in light of theologies of hope, can be read as recognition of a promised salvation. Once a participant in the world's terrible suffering, Ian has this suffering unleashed upon himself. This death is merely a consequence of that which he has experienced, but his return to life is the proof of some radical break, a fracturing of all expectation, a promise: the fruit of Calvin's "warfare of sufferance." He awakens not to the absence of pain, of course, but to the awareness that his pain, his world, sets into relief the possibility of a transformed world in which the dead return to life, and in which sin and suffering are finally displaced by an unmerited generosity.

The theological reading is certainly a tempting one, especially insofar as it promises to make sense of hope in a play like *Blasted*. However, it is also highly problematic. The generosity that greets Ian in his resurrected life is, at one and the same time, a violence against Cate's body and values. The "blood seeping from between her legs" (Kane, 60) when she returns with food suggests that in prostituting herself for their survival she has only allowed herself to become a more willing victim of rape. Moreover, the resurrection Ian experiences seems to be something of an ambivalent device in Kane's work. In *Phaedra's Love* Hippolytus is clearly murdered on stage. Suddenly opening his eyes after having been strangled, disembowelled, and then kicked (an apparently lifeless corpse) by policemen, he sees vultures circling overhead and, with a smile, he says:

If there could have been more moments like this (103).

In *Cleansed*, while all the temporal and psychological boundaries of the play are highly ambiguous, various characters/ including one named Grace- also seem to die and later return to life, to be tortured and broken and yet healed. Each play insists upon a distinctive range of responses, from pathos to irony, and each moment of resurrection suggests the others in a way that makes it difficult, if not impossible, to locate a single meaning in Ian's return from death. In the end, then, we do not really know what to hear in Ian's "thank you."

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<sup>40</sup> Kane, 60.

<sup>41</sup> Kane, who apparently did not have the Passion in mind when writing, says that when she first saw the play performed Ian did indeed appear Christ-like. His resurrection, however, she reads as a death and descent into hell, rather than a rebirth and a new life. Saunders also thinks of Ian as a Christ-figure, although he understands the parallel to function as a "parody." See Saunders, 2002, 64.

There is hope as solace in *Blasted*, but it does not come as the "gift of survival." Cate and Ian, at the play's end, merely happen to survive. Moreover, the traditional teleological structure of drama, in which events move steadily towards some ultimate resolution, is not really a part of Kane's repertoire of aesthetic devices. However, true, the force of the play is concentrated in these last scenes: Ian, blinded by his violence and vulgarity; Cate, so insecure and uncertain that she remains with her victimizer, allowing herself to be victimized for his sake. What hope there is has everything to do with the promise of a different world, of a radically distinct reality; but that promise is not to be found, or at least not fully, at the end. Indeed, it makes more sense to think of hope arising throughout *Blasted* in references to others outside the main action of the story, to partial stories we, as readers or audience, much construct for ourselves. Thus, the idea of hope dependent upon the world's violence, upon the world as violence, leading not to a renewal inevitable in the course of time but to a radical break with lived reality- this idea is most consonant with Moltmann's theology of hope, although it is implicit in the other theologians mentioned as well. This hope must not be found in concluding dramatic moments, and thus, in Calvin's expression, "it can be never be joined with manifest possession" (221).

Kane refuses her audiences any solace at the end of *Blasted*. That requires readers and audience to interrogate the intellectual resources Kane may have brought to the writing of the play. It may be surprising to recognize that her notion of hope is not dependent upon violence and despair. However, in the context of a tradition of hope within Christian theology, Kane's allusion to the Pauline theological virtues, and more particularly to her sense that *Blasted* manifests hope, begins to make more sense: hope is the inverse, the other, of the worlds she presents so relentlessly in her work, it is said, the hidden *quantum* of solace. Hence, any understanding of hope in her work teases out those fragmentary visions of other realities, those options currently inaccessible to, and yet at least potentially capable of breaking in upon, her main characters. Readers as troubled by Kane's violence as by her suicide may find all this a slender consolation. But according to theologians such as Calvin and Moltmann, such is the nature of hope and solace.

### 2.3.5 Analyses and Examples of Violence Towards Love, Gratitude and Solace in *Blasted*

In *Blasted* Kane shows the empirical or common violence: war and rape, torture, murder, violation as circle of predation. However, the circle of predation by sex and violence is sided by love and violence, which are cohabitants. This is done by means of a humanistic and well-organized discourse,<sup>42</sup> expressed vividly in the Soldier's combined tenderness and torture as he rapes Ian, at the same time reliving making love with Col:

**Soldier** ( ...) I made love with Col (48)

**Soldier** Bastards killed her, now I'm here.  
Now I'm here.

*(He pushes the rifle in Ian's face)*

Turn over, Ian.

**Ian** Why?

**Soldier** Going to fuck you.

**Ian** No

**Soldier** Kill you then.

**Ian** Fine.

**Soldier** See. Rather be shot than fucked and shot.

**Ian** Yes.

**Soldier** And now you agree with anything I say.

*He kisses Ian very tenderly on the lips.*

*They stare at each other.*

**Soldier** You smell like her. Same cigarettes.

*The Soldier turns Ian with one hand.*

*He holds the revolver to Ian's head with the other.*

*He pulls down Ian's trousers, undoes his own and  
rapes him – eyes closed and smelling Ian's hair.*

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<sup>42</sup> (Because she maintained a benevolent belief in the natural innocence and goodness of the primitive culture in spite of her tragic ending.)

*The Soldier is crying his heart out.*

*Ian's face registers pain but he is silent. (49)*

The coupling of love and violence is also inherent in Cate and Ian's relationship, contentious because it is sometimes tender, sometimes fraught, often ambivalent—not least because of its retrospective implication of paedophilia. An example of the tender moments in spite of the violence:

**Cate** You can hear me.

**Ian** Won't hurt you. I promise.

**Cate** *(Goes to him slowly and touches the top of his head)*

**Ian** Help me.

**Cate** *(Strokes his hair)* (53)

Thus, the central section of *Blasted* is the catalyst for the transformation of Ian and Cate's relationship from violence towards love, gratitude and solace. As a result, Ian expresses a gratitude in his final words of "thank you" (61) to Cate. Sierz identifies the reversal that occurs in *Blasted* as Ian becomes dependant and Cate grows into a survivor. As Sierz notes, it is through this reversal that the play asserts the possibility of something beautiful emerging out of despair and violence (2001 a: 91). This scenario is very much in accord with the application of an "ethics of catastrophe" to *Blasted*. The critic Ken Urban observes that, like the playwright Barker who asserts that "catastrophe is also birth" (180), Kane creates a theatre that does not offer solutions or redemption but rather "the possibility that an ethics can exist between wounded bodies, that after devastation, good becomes possible" (Urban, 2000: 37). Similarly, Graham Saunders draws upon Jonathan Dollimore's conception of the "tragic paradox" – of dignity arising from debasement- to observe that at the moment when Ian might be "expected to be most brutalised he becomes most human" (2004:73) in his grateful response to Cate's decision to return to the room and feed him. In this final scene of the play, Cate returns to the devastated hotel room – bleeding but bringing food and drink – to find Ian blinded and almost buried, the drips of water from the leaking roof merging with the blood on his face.

### 2.3.6 Violence in *Cleansed*

Kane revealed as we have seen before, that *Cleansed* was a response to Roland Barthes's provocative comment in *A Lover's Discourse* that being in love was akin to incarceration in Dachau (Saunders 2002:93); and that indeed the play itself was a testimony to the experience of love. If critics and commentators struggled to place *Blasted* in a consensual context and finally offered it at best as a response to the shocking rage of inter-ethnic violence in former Yugoslavia, *Cleansed* could only be attributed to a more interior disorder, a more private pain. As the text is dedicated to Bellow inpatients and staff at the ES3 Clinic, and an acute psychiatric inpatient admission ward at the Maudsley Hospital in London, that reading seems borne out. *Cleansed* departed from the legible context of English playwriting and dispersed an assemblage of images with a lineage in expressionist and performance art with the unhurried tempo of a nightmare.

Thus, the dissolving of inside/outsider, self/other, subject/object oppositions is crucial in *Cleansed* as a way of showing violence. For all the violence inflicted on bodies in *Cleansed*, language is possibly the most violent agent, although language is not even particularly productive: violence on all levels is pervasive, and here represents metonymically a larger present, which cannot be directly accessed in theatre but must still be expressed through performance.

In *Cleansed* there is a continued abandonment of narrative gratification in favour of fragments of action; the images are pegged on a slender fable: the accession of Grace to some mystical institution (presided over by the mysterious Tinker) to retrieve the remains of her brother Graham. The play repudiates development and action. Indeed Kane replaces action with violence, that is, by means of psychological and linguistic reaction – but here it merely forms a type of punctuation, expressive of status and processes beyond language. In turn, the dialogue is flat and enervated, which reduces characters to mere bodies and voices in favour of expressing violent acts.

In *Cleansed* the institution Grace enters is described as a university with cricket grounds as medical rooms, but it functions as a site for arrival experimentation such as Huntingdon Life Sciences (Kane herself was a vegan and opposed to vivisection). It is a death camp but also, in a contemporary twist, a rape camp, as in Omarska in the former Yugoslavian conflict. The play's title certainly echoes the key phrase of that war: "ethnic cleansing." However, the setting is also a house of correction, a prison and an asylum, comparable to those analysed in Michael Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*. The deliberate confusion of functions and spaces is critical to Kane's terrorism- by fusing the familiar with

the unfamiliar, she reproduces the shock of the extempore use of social spaces as the deployments of gyms in Bosnia as torture chambers. Again, Kane's black vision dresses up the entire process of being social as a constant deformation and mutilation of the self which even the perpetrators do not transcend; witness Tinker, who, like Ian, reveals male sexuality as chiefly masturbatory as voyeuristic.

The afflictions suffered by the body of the condemned such as in *Cleansed* (as we will see later and with examples) were a way of representing lessons. By means of language the violence also counting aloud on an abacus in *Cleansed* has the effect on spectators of violation, a brutal detachment of temporality from history (this detachment itself is a historical signifier) as Robin is counting the number of days he has left in his prison-sanatorium (143-4). After Robin counts again, this time to thirty, he investigates if he has provoked any response. "Gracie?" Robin finally asks an indifferent, presumably drugged Grace. Grace. Grace. Grace. Please, Miss," before the chair is pulled out from under him, and Grace remains utterly impassive (144). Tinker, leading Grace off, says, in the last line of the scene, "Say goodnight to the folks, Gracie" (145).

This scene is, I argue, the most punishing in *Cleansed*. The inability to express, the having, as Beckett put it in *Not I*, nothing with which to express, except the dead and flat pleading of sequential numbers (rattled off in time, spatialising and temporalising speech); the sheer repetition of a person's name; and finally, a last-ditch injection of protocol ("Please, Miss") highlight the sheer cruelty of the scene, the blunt, bouncing knife of language, the emptiness of attempts at expression, the virulence of language in its manifest forms.

Kane forces spectators to register the numbering in-tameness of counting before the pain of the death of Robin, whose last plea, after "Gracie" and "Grace" both fail to work, is an alienated "Miss;" she forces the spectator to apprehend the violence of "saying goodnight to the folks." Like "lovely," a word consistently punctuating both *Cleansed* as *Blasted* (often closing scenes), "folks" is a slap in the face: Robin sways from the ceiling, and Graham, himself already dead, sits beneath him.

Through an emphasis on the embodiment and spatialisation of language, Kane demands our constant attention to the pain of observing horror *in time*. Kane's plays utilise, mobilise, redirect, redeploy, make rhythmic and make violent the designified "flatness" of language in its range of cultural locations, dramatising and performing its lack, and the layers of language that constitute, represent, and violate subjectivity. Both repetition and rhythm (recall Barthes's lacerating "return of rhythm") are pervasive in *Cleansed*.

Kane's metonymic representational ethic foregrounds repetition – of language, of actions – and thus empties them of their subjective meaning, enacting an anti-metaphorical movement, as words ("Lovely"), phrases ("I love you") and even violations (the constant hacking away at body parts in *Cleansed*), are shown as repeated and repeatable. In this way, her work breaks out of "a vertical hierarchy of value," as Phelan<sup>43</sup> describes the theoretical product of metaphor, which would lend itself to a less cruel theatre, one with more easily imperceptible morals (150). *Cleansed*'s repetition exceeds attempts to "mean" in the sense of a reproductive critical discourse that identifies metaphoric meaning. Kane presents us with the violence of living bodies; and then literalises this violence as Tinker cuts off Carl's feet.

Kane's work – in part through her attention to repetition and rhythm – ritualises the everyday as the horizon of history. Kane approaches the vast, horrific present through a necessarily metonymic performative. "This relationship of domination is so more a "relationship" than the place where it occurs is place," Foucault writes; and *Cleansed*'s university-cum-concentration-camp comes to mind (as does *Blasted*'s hotel-room-cum-bombed-out-shelter). "For precisely this reason, it is fixed, throughout its history, in rituals, in meticulous procedures that impose rights and obligations. It establishes marks of its power and engraves memories on things and even within bodies" (Foucault, 1977: 150).<sup>44</sup> Even through attention to such seemingly prosaic rituals as "I-love-you," Kane's work alludes to a domination-threaded totality of history. Kane's spectacle of cruelty, producing powerful images of suffering, mandates a performative revelation; a rearrangement or renegotiation of looping that collapses distances yet does not posit transcendence or didacticism. Rod fittingly declares, "I'm with you *now*. I'll do my best, moment by moment, not to betray you. Now" (111). Performance "addresses its deepest questions" to the now, as Phelan reminds us (Phelan, 146). Yet as Kane's history-driven theatre insists – to draw on Foster's language – "there is no simple Now: every present is nonsynchronous, a mix of different times" (Foster, 1993:5).

Kane's performances stand in for a new cruelty of history or the cruelty of mankind by means of an extremely accurate and horrific vision. For example Kane, (as has been said before) based Robin's abacus-counting suicide on an apartheid-era incident involving an imprisoned Black activist on South Africa's Robben Island (hence the character's name), and

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<sup>43</sup> Phelan, P. (1993) *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (New York: Routledge).

<sup>44</sup> Foucault, M (1977), *Language, Counter –Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. D.F. Bouchard, trans. B. and S. Simon (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977)

that Carl's anal impalement (piercing through with [sth] sharp) is said to be modelled on a Serb method on crucifixion.

Kane also implies that Carl's and Rod's suffering confer on them Christ-like qualities, e.g. in the scene when Rod says "You'd have watched them crucify me" (129) and also asks Carl for this forgiveness, because of the tortures Carl has had to endure as a consequence of his love for Rod. However, Carl's betrayal of Rod serves to purify and strengthen their love.

Jameson posits a powerful concept of history apt for Kane's work:

History is what hurts, it is what refuses desire and sets inexorable limits... History can be apprehended only through its effects, and never directly as some reified force. This is indeed the ultimate sense in which History as ground and horizon needs no particular theoretical justification: we may be sure that its alienating necessities will not forget us, however much we might prefer to ignore them. (Jameson, 102).

In conclusion, Kane dares us to disagree. Her theatre confrontationally insists that, despite the fact that history hurts – desperately, horribly, and fatally – we must not distance ourselves from its cruelty, we are part of this cruelty. Furthermore, she throws us a question like a stone:

-Does the violent ritual purification of these bodies in *Cleansed* serve to purify the community?-

### **2.3.7 Violence in *Crave***

In all her plays, we attend to the loss of the victim's identity. The victims reduced to silent anonymity through violence. Thus, she uses letters to name the characters, A, B, M, and C. Besides one of the major topics in *Crave* is the dissolution of self within a puzzling, internal landscape.

In this play violence is not analysed in depth, because as Nils Tarbert commented, she was "past violence" (Voigts-Virchow, 195). *Crave*, remains Kane's most beautiful and cryptic play. The text is a patchwork of languages and registers, citations and references, stage poetry and private messages, expansive humour and dark despair. One of the generally unrecognised features of it is that, in writing the play, Kane returned to the monologues and raided them, lifting large sections to build her new structure. *Crave* will be analysed in the chapter devoted to solace by means of poetry.



### 2.3.8 Violence in *4.48 Psychosis*

There is a discourse of delirium in this play. The displacement, the deformation of the characters into voices show that violence of the first plays has given way to a more poetic landscape, although her sorrow smoulders also with anger. So she says in this play:

Depression is anger. It's what you did, who was there and who you're blaming (212).

Thus, depression is seen here as a consequence of violence, external violence that leads towards depression, it is said, an exogenous depression versus endogenous depression.<sup>45</sup> Mainly because of abuse in dating relationships, intimate partner violence and drugs. Although the text shows other types of violence such as family violence. These aspects will be analysed in the chapter entitled "Torture."

As it happens with *Crave*, *4.48 Psychosis* will be analysed in the chapter devoted to solace by means of poetry.

### 2.3.9 Violence in *Skin*

*Skin* is the only one of a number screenplays written by Kane, which was made into a film and subsequently published by Kane, and subsequently published together with the other play-texts. It is not certain when exactly it came into being.

The play with which *Skin* shares most of its thematic concerns and literary influences is *Cleansed*. However, the technical advances offered by film allowed Kane to show scenes of bodily mutilation in minute detail with a degree of imitative accuracy that she could never achieve in the theatre.

*Skin* is by no means a socially engaged film, or a naturalistic or Dogma-like documentary that presents a slice of life about a neo-Nazi hooligan from South London, although such an interpretation might be suggested by the title. Kane is not in the least interested in investigating the reasons for the revival of nationalistic movements, which Europe faced in the latter part of the skinhead era. She does not do it in order to fathom the psychological causes and social consequences of hatred towards foreigners. Rather she uses racism and violence as material for metaphors to talk about one of the central themes that operate throughout her entire oeuvre: how irresistible longing for another person leads to

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<sup>45</sup> Endogenous depression is internal, biological and somatic. Exogenous depression is externally caused - environmental.: [http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What\\_is\\_the\\_difference\\_b..](http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_is_the_difference_b..) However, these medical aspects are not the topic of this research.

destruction of the self and ruins the inner life of the protagonists. Also, in *Skin*, the central topic is Billy's life and his obsessive fascination for an unknown, black woman who lives in a house opposite his whom he observes from his window.

When Billy plucks up the courage to visit Marcia, she makes him undergo a kind of purification ritual in which he is methodically deprived of all that established his identity as a white male English supremacist. Marcia forces him to have sex, beats him, feeds him with dog food, shaves his body, scrubs his tattoos with bleach and a stiff brush, and cuts her name into his back with a knife. In the 1st sequence of this cruel rite, Billy, dressed in Marcia's clothes, is sitting at her feet and utters only one word "Mum" (263). Two similar scenes that frame the action of *Skin* very clearly mark the beginning and the end of this process involving the destruction of a sense of identity. In one of the first sequences of the film, Billy looks at himself in the mirror, smiles, then makes faces and finally kisses his reflection. Towards the end of the film, he examines his face, disfigured by Marcia, then breaks the mirror with his fist and looks at his face again, this time fragmentarily reflected on the cracked surface. Therefore, the series of physical tortures, which Marcia performs on Billy's body, significantly change the nature of the process of the loss of identity and show the major subject as it is the dissolution of the self.

*Skin* borders the outside and the inside of the body, but also between the external reality and the inner world. It is also a screen on which marks of identity are projected, a surface on which the character's past is inscribed in the form of scars and bruises that reflect their psychic traumas.

However, *Skin* is a formal experiment and Kane was not interested in television or film, because she always stressed that her texts, although very often eschewing traditional dramatic conventions, have to be embodied on stage in order to achieve their full force of impact on the spectators or listeners. (Saunders, 2002a: 150). This directness of contact between the stage and the audience is irretrievably lost whenever a human voice is electronically modified or when the living embodiment of a theatrical performance becomes mercilessly framed and captured on film. For it is only in the theatre that an unmediated voice can acquire the necessary dimension of corporality and materiality that will reach the imagination of the audience. Thus, when asked about the reason why she decided to write for the theatre, she answered that only theatre allowed her to observe the reaction of the audience (Tabert, 1998: 16).

## 2.4 Conclusion

While *Blasted* explores the territory of power and violation by juxtaposing micro and macro levels of violence, *Phaedra's Love* and *Cleansed* are thematically linked in their dramatisation of the extremes of desire and love. In both plays, points of crisis are reached when the relationship between subject and object of desire is carried to absolute extremes and this extremism is expressed in the formal qualities of the plays.

Thanks in part to the initial outraged reaction to her first play, *Blasted*, one of the most remarked on features of Kane's first three plays is their extreme, and what was perceived as unbearable, violence on stage, remaining a glaring irony. However, all her plays are associated with a fascination towards creative destruction, it is said, a mixture of violence and verbal despair with a poetic methodology that will be shown later, mainly in *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis*

## 3. Specific Acts of Inflicting Pain in Kane's Plays: Torture

Real pain, agonizing pain, is inflicted on a person; but torture, which contains specific acts of inflicting pain, is also itself a demonstration and magnification of the felt experience of pain. Therefore, torture is a process, which not only converts but also announces the conversion of every conceivable aspect of the event and the environment into an agent of pain.

According to Elaine Scarry, there are three simultaneous phenomena in the structure of torture:

1. The pain is inflicted on a person in every/intensifying ways.
2. The pain, continually amplified within the person's body, is also amplified in the sense that it is objectified, made visible to those outside the person's body.
3. The objectified pain is denied as pain and read as power, a translation made possible by the obsessive mediation of agency. (Scarry, 51)

The first of three steps is the infliction of great physical pain on a human being. In Kane, there are examples in *Blasted* when the Soldier narrates the horrible inflictions of pain in war to his girlfriend Col and the torture and rape to Ian.

The second step, where the subjective characteristics of pain are objectified and externalized means that it can be grasped from the outside. This means that torture aspires to

the totality of pain. Antonin Artaud once described the way in which pain "as it is intensified and deepens, multiplies its resources and means of access at every level of the sensibility"(Scarry, 54). So the torturers, like pain itself, continually multiply their resources and means of access until the room and everything in it becomes a giant externalized map of the prisoner's or victim's feelings. Thus, torture can be more easily seen because it has dimension and depth. In the case of Kane's theatre, this step means that the palpable manifestation of the victim's pain is the direct and indirect goal of all her plays by means of the perpetrator that appears in them. This is why she chose theatre and not poetry to express pain and torture because theatre allows her to externalize the violence with the response of the audience, which represents the outside.

The third step, the conversion of the enlarged map of human suffering into an emblem of the strength, into an insignia of power, is the final product and outcome of torture. Therefore, Kane uses the scenes of a bomb attack in *Blasted*, the mutilation of Hippolytus as staging power, or the concentration camp as a university in *Cleansed* to give us the outcome of torture as it is the insignia of power by means of suffering.

The representation of violence in Kane serves as the locus for testifying the process of torture, the thick agony of the body (Hippolytus in *Phaedra's Love* with his limp phallus and the soul (in *4.48 Psychosis*) establishes the literary vehicle which transfers the domestication, the captivation, the obliviousness and failure; the horror of torture by means of exploiting pain in the painful experience of the victims. Thus, for example in *Cleansed*, in scene four, Carl is tortured by Tinker and an unseen group of men. With one method of torture, when Carl's trousers are pulled down and a pole is pushed up his anus, Kane alludes to an old form of torture that was used for the killing of King Edward II.

Concluding, the structure of torture in Kane plays shows the thorny arena of violence itself as undeniable and offers no alternative: atrocity after atrocity - leaving us face to face with brutality.

### **3.1 Torture in Kane's Theatre by Means of Mutilations, sexual, Aggression, Suicide and Anthropophagia.**

**Ian** I am not a torturer (*Blasted*, 46)

The mutilations, sexual aggression, suicide and anthropophagia in *Blasted*, *Cleansed* and *Phaedra's Love* are considered by Eckart Voigts- Virchow as "a theatre of excess and hyperbole" (De Vos and Saunders, 195). However, these atrocities in excess serve for Kane to represent torture on stage. *Phaedra's Love* has fellatio, rape, vultures, and genital mutilation and disembowelment. *Cleansed* offers various amputations, rats carrying away body parts and a pole forced a few inches through an anus. *Blasted* shows rape, war, anthropophagia. All these monstrosities have the effective impact of what is done by and to the characters on stage to express the voice of Kane. With these atrocities, Kane explores consistently and fiercely: the difficulty of responding to immeasurable experiences, such as love, violence and suffering. At the same time, Kane offers the three simultaneous phenomena in the structure of torture, according to Scarry (above mentioned): the infliction of pain, the objectification of the subjective attributes of pain and the translation of the objectified attributes of pain into the insignia of power.

### 3.2 Perpetrators of Violence in Kane's Theatre.

Del tirano di todo, di más<sup>46</sup>. José Martí

An act of violence is a symptom of a breakdown of social sympathy on the part of the perpetrator and marks the regression to an earlier moral state. Consequently, those who perpetrate atrocious offences; the ruffians that draw the lines of life, with or without any sense of religion and morality or a vivid example of the perfect brutalization of society, are the perpetrators that generate victims.

The terms brutality and tyranny profess violence in detail and are the images to define perpetrators. Perpetrators do not search for selfhood, because they are consumed with self-hatred. Thus, self-hatred is the main characteristic of perpetrators, self-hatred is a destructive force against the spiritual domination of one person over another. As a result, perpetrators search out, the use of pain and violence, especially sexual violence, where the victim is depicted as prey for the hunter. Moreover, the triumphs over the victim establish the territory of the perpetrator. The pain and rage suffered by the victim at the hands of the perpetrator

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<sup>46</sup> (Quotation from *Rabos de Lagartija* by Juan Marsé (2002) in the front cover of his book. Barcelona: Planeta D'Agostini)

represents a relief for their self-hatred. Through the violence, the perpetrator destroys not only the form of the victim's body but also the familiar form of understanding through which the victim constructs him or herself as a subject.

The following table shows the abhorrent, detestable torturers who appear in Kane's plays:

**Table of violence perpetrators in Kane's plays:**

**The rapist**, in *Comic Monologue*

**Ian** (in *Blasted*)

**The soldier** ("")

**Phaedra** also with her suicide in *Phaedra's love* to punish Hippolytus

**The priest, the king Theseus and the crowd with Man 1, Man 2 Woman 1, Woman 2** in *Phaedra's love*

**Tinker and an unseen group of men** in *Cleansed*. At times **Rod**, as a dominant lover.

**A and B** (at times) in *Crave*

**The voices** (at times) in *4.48 Psychosis*

**Billy**, a young skinhead, who joins in a brutal racist attack on a mixed-race wedding party, and **Marcia** an her desire to make Billy acknowledge his own acts of violence and racism in *Skin*

If God employed the indescribable sufferings of hell as a warning to instruct humanity, modern perpetrators of torture use psychology and suffering which are legalized in our society. Physical suffering is not legalized but it occurs as well. Moreover, nobody punishes the perpetrators, there is no way to punish them, to dominate, and what is worst to nullify them, and to convert the offended not as -nihil- (zero) as they do, but to transform the offended into a testimony of permanent suffering, an example in the eyes of the majority of the useless mercy towards the offended, because mercy does not offer movement for the victims. Therefore, Kane offers a testimony of permanent suffering in the vision of all her plays, not only with theory and analysis but because this testimony goes beyond words and it is necessary to the theatre.

Theatre can be an art of correcting injustices. It is also a way for us to communicate what happened in the past, what is happening now, whether of past or present glory or past

present disorder. Thus, the violence in Kane's plays is a choice against silence by means of theatre; since "nada es tan inmediato como el teatro." (Walker, 69). Besides, it is a dominant perception in Kane's plays where the immediate interconnection occurs not as an acceptance. On the contrary, this immediate interconnection occurs and is always shown as an immoral visibility, and above all as a protest, as a testimony of violence against silence.

### 3.3 Victims in Kane's Theatre

The victim body acts as a blank text on which an insecure individual's worldview may be written.

(Tanner, 4)

Thus, the victim's body is both medium and metaphor. In this sense, the untamed lyrical, i.e., Sarah Kane with her plays traced the diary of a victim, a genuine victim, which could be herself. However, as she is mainly a creative person, the plays can be separated from her own biography.

According to the Oxford Dictionary, a victim can be defined as a person (or an animal) suffering injury, pain, loss, etc...because of circumstances, an event, the ill-will of somebody, etc. This ill will of somebody is the "*axis mundi*" of her plays. However, there are other connotations which have to be analysed in her victims.

In his 1925 essay, *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*, Freud saw pain as a form of mourning due to the loss of an object by which he means principally the separation from the mother experienced by the individual as an unretrievable loss, a kind of symbolic death for which he mourns and feels pain. Pain is a reaction to a situation of loss, such as missing the mother. For Freud any loss of an overvalued object is responsible for a kind of "mourning" pain. Thus, when Hippolytus is mutilated the reaction must be of mourning pain, but this tragic protagonist, in the situation of danger where he has been castrated and mutilated, does not feel anxiety for the loss of his penis. On the contrary, by virtue of blood plus flesh as food for cultures, all of this is seen as a transition for a body in pain. He is the prey for these beasts, a victim. Nevertheless, the vision of relief beyond the horror because this feeling of repulsion is replaced by the feeling of solace towards a body in pain. His forlorn, desolate, destroyed, violated body emerges the poetic. A sweet torture that leads him to become a different soul through a horrible body torn in bits.

The victims of a patriarchal social structure are also present in Kane: the violence that appears in her plays makes visible the extent of their oppression visible. The victims' bodies (Cate, Ian victimized by the Soldier, and the Soldier victimized by war...) in pain are an expression of the entrapment in a social system that reduces them only to bodies. Nevertheless, bodies haunted by guilt, remorse and above all by social, sexual and psychological violence.

The fact that Kane repeatedly structures her plays around victims of violence and perpetrators of it, demonstrates that violence is a central concern of her work. Clearly, Kane's plays interrogate certain modes of behaviour associated with structures of domination. Her plays are symbols of the aggressors and by turns, both the victim and the victimizer. Her plays represent different routes, different responses to violence, and our own encounters with a violent world. As we have been seen, violence directed both against the other and against the self (From *Blasted* to *4.48 Psychosis*). Therefore, her plays bring agony and despair as well as punishment, because all her characters can be killers and victims. All her characters become the object and the subject of violence. From victimization and all its victimized positions we contemplate different series of transformations, violence experienced both from the outsider and the inside (the bomb in *Blasted* or the tortured psyche in *4.48 Psychosis* that confer the horror and pathos and express the repetition of violence that rebounds against itself, etc).

Kane wishes to show us that violence traps, and makes a needless repetition of violent acts addictive. A vicious circle that paralyzes and in this paralysis we become victims. Thus, the performance of her plays are a live testimony of victimhood,

### **3.4 The Victimizer and Victim Together: Cate and Ian, Ian and the Soldier**

As has been noted, *Blasted* implied a direct link between domestic violence in Britain and civil war in the former Yugoslavia.

Ian uses and adopts that violence as fuel for their lovemaking. He transgresses to feed the heart on fantasies; he turns into perpetrator penetrating the invisibility of his victim: Cate. However, the results of an act of violence return to the perpetrator. The bleeding body; Ian's bleeding eyes and the marks of his suffering reveal the cost of violence.



The assault on the victim, Cate, is an other important aspect to analyze. It happens apparently in acceptance and without absence of guilt because the victim surrenders in order not to be hurt any more. This is the manifestation of victimization where Ian confirms the total absence of guilt because of the acceptance of the victim. This incident of violence is an act of rape or torture.

When Ian is blinded by the Soldier in the act of eating his eyes - violence is linked to its consequences - thus, the vulnerable human body receives the cost of violence from perpetrator to victim, and vice-versa. Furthermore, Kane's connection of domestic cruelty with wartime violence becomes especially poignant with regard to her depiction of cruel sexual acts and the use of food and eating rituals. She makes clear in *Blasted* that sexual acts and the acquisition and consumption of food are fundamental for the creation of the play's specific reality. *Blasted* explores the symbolic meanings that food and rituals play. For instance, Ian drinks alcohol and orders sandwiches or Cate tries to avoid eating meat unless it is inevitable showing her behaviour as a victim.

The disfigurement in Ian becomes a mask as symbol of violence. His facial disfiguration claims to unmask the truth about his life and personality. This representation of the distortions in his face and body implies that the spectator must distinguish the life-story that is condensed into one moment of his life. The description of this moment becomes a metaphor of the past, of his past evoking a metaphor of injury. However, what is behind his eye-socket? behind this cave?, Ian falls victim of his own violence and becomes simultaneously "victim and executioner."

In this way, Kane expresses the irrecoverable nature of violence. These eruptions of face-to-face violent atavism reveal the vulnerability of those immune to violence. One has to assess Kane's grafting of atrocity onto the normalized violence of the world of Ian and Cate, with Ian's lazy recitations of a murder over the phone to his editor before he rapes Cate. When the soldier also arrives in Act II and rapes and mutilates Ian, the brutal exchanges between the soldier and Ian reveal how horror becomes routine.

Ian sees his task of packaging violence (shooting and rapes and kids getting fiddled by queer priests and schoolteacher (Kane, 12) Ian is, after all, a "home journalist" who doesn't cover "foreign affairs." To this extent he speaks for a culture that refuses to read violence as part of social action and which seeks to trivialize suffering through narrative convention and cliché. In the re-education of Ian, the play releases violence from a limited ideology and consoling frameworks: it makes it precisely gratuitous. The actions that occur are beyond

description; they even seem to defy theatrical realization. They push representation to its limits and break given forms in the process.

## 4. Sexual Abuse and Rape in Kane's Plays

Sexual abuse is one focus of the plays in Kane. Together with it the psychological abuse suffered by means of perpetrators or suffered by means of oneself- as is suicide in 4.48 *Psychosis*- or *Blasted* that which displays the habitual abuse of women, within and without war.

Kane places rape victims in her plays. Cate in *Blasted* is the docile victim with a kind of poetic enslavement, condemned to worship Ian. A poetic enslavement in the sense that she causes fascination as a docile girl from the theatrical point of view and the *mise-en-scène*. However, the trauma of Cate's rape experience is deep and long lasting. Here, Kane expresses her mystical fascination for women, but this is not the main focus of most of her plays, although her plays are formed by poetry filled with feminine fragments, feminine in the sense that only women can be raped via vagina.

### 4.1 Rape

The law defines rape as sexual intercourse with a female, not the wife of the perpetrator, accomplished without the consent of the female. Hence the law denies that wives can be raped by husbands, or that men can rape men, or that women can rape women or men. It also differentiates forced vaginal penetration from forced oral or anal penetration, and from cases in which a man forces a woman to masturbate him or uses his mouth, hand, or some foreign object to penetrate her instead of his penis.<sup>47</sup> Although in some aspects due to the new laws in mistreatment and violence towards women and in general, rape has begun to be considered and expanded a little.<sup>48</sup>

For the purpose of this thesis I have decided to agree with the legal definition in some aspects and not in others. This is what Kane did with the testimony of her plays, and at the beginning was accused of pornography by a teacher at Bristol University. It is appalling to

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<sup>47</sup> It can be revised Russell, Diana E.H (1984) *The Politics of Rape. The Victim's Perspective*. New York: Stein and Day.

<sup>48</sup> García González, M.Nieves, (2008) *Violencia de género: investigaciones y aportaciones pluridisciplinarias*. Madrid: Editorial Fragua.

find how common it is for clinicians and researchers (usually male) to assume that rape victims enjoy being raped because in cases of forcible rape there is a percent of the victims that experience orgasms. Here, my intention is to show by means of Kane's plays, the feelings of rape victims as Kane, herself did.

I include also the following situation as rape:

-The envious pushing of one girl towards another in order that the pushed shows her body (as a command impossible to avoid) to an unknown man, provoking her to be raped without obtaining pleasure and becoming psychologically paralysed as a victim for all her life. Kane shows many varieties of rape except this last one, probably because she did not live enough to observe or analyse this.-

People often ask what the classic Greek myths reveal about rape. Actually, they reveal very little; for one thing, myths about any given god or goddess are often contradictory: the male gods, Zeus, Poseidon, Apollo, Hades and Pan, raped with zest, trickery and frequency. Yet, on the other hand, the goddess and mortal women who were victim of these rapes, Hera, Io, Europa, Cassandra, Leda, rarely suffered serious consequences beyond getting pregnant and bearing a child, which served much to move the story line forward.

The classic Greek myths about rape were notably glamorized. Rape showed a notable glamour in the classic Greek myths. Zeus' sister, wife or spouse, had a fool proof method of recovery. She would bathe yearly in a special place to restore her virginity. Aphrodite was a Champion seducer in her own right. Philomela was raped by Tereus, king of Thrace, who took the precaution of cutting out her tongue so she could not tell the story. Philomela cleverly embroidered her woes into a piece of needlework that she sent to her sister, Procne, who happened to be Tereus' wife. In sisterly revenge, Procne killed Tereus' son. (Later all of them were turned into birds). The young girl Kainis, raped by Poseidon, chose an unusual and highly personal solution to her problem. She asked Poseidon to change her into a man in order to avoid future violations. Kainis the girl promptly became Kaineus the warrior, who worshiped his spear (In *Cleansed*, Grace becomes his brother).

Zeus' rape of Leda by taking the form of a swan, which resulted in the Birth of Helen, considered to be a myth of surperheroic proportions responsible for the eventual fall of Troy. Robert Graves suggested that Zeus' many rapes refer to the Hellenic conquest of goddess shrines, or more simply, to the triumph of the patriarchy over the matriarchy.

Freud held the pessimistic view that men are inherently sadistic while women are innately masochistic. The application of rape is obvious. Men like to rape and women like to

be raped. Unfortunately, Freud's idea outlived him and is reflected in much of the literature of rape. While it is true that some women do appear to get some kind of gratification from fantasies of being raped, it does not follow that it is part of women's nature. Because people are in complete control of their fantasies, even if the fantasy involves a situation in which they are out of control. Besides, in real rape or an attempted rape situation, unlike the fantasy version, people, in this case women, are usually afraid and often terrified.

The remarkable thing is not that rape occurs, but that we have managed for so long to see it as a rare and deviant act, when it is, in fact, so embedded in our cultural norms. Besides, rape is sexual essentially because it rests on the very social difference between the sexes. If men rape women, it is precisely because they are women in a social sense, and when a male is raped, he too is raped "as a woman."

For the rapist, violence may come to serve a temporary affirmation of an unstable self. For the victim, however, violence is defined by literal and psychological destruction of form, a threat to personal coherence, a sacrifice of self-control. The victim's body becomes the material extension of vulnerability. The rapist appropriates the victim's body through violence. Thus, the strategy of rape is employed by the dominant, resurrecting the cult of domesticity against our own will.

## **4.2 More Explanations on Rape and Tables to Summarize the Topic**

The rape victim is considered impure, "spoiled good" mainly referring to women. Furthermore, the rape victim is seen as someone who is "ASKING FOR IT." But, as I am not going to develop in this research a politics of rape in Kane's plays, because it is not the main purpose of this research, I am not going to develop the notion of the impurity of a rape victim and its consequences. However, my interest in this topic, that without any doubt is offered as an important theatrical experiment in Kane's plays, has led to me to include the following tables, with some relevant phrases and ideas that lead us to understanding rape in order to achieve its end by means of requiring the most total revolution for which people have ever struggled or should have struggled in sex roles.

VICTIMS of RAPE
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+No right to say "NO."
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\*\*\*\*Lovers rape too.

\*\*\*\*Some of our best friends are rapists.

\*\*\*\* "Bitch," he said after having raped her.

+The most normal man can be a rapist.

+Even the agressor looks for comfort when he attacks.

+Good girls get raped too.

+Homosexual rape > men raped as women.

+A hippie can be raped too. Who cares if someone rapes a hippie?

+Females as prey, as cunts.

+The role of virgin and the role of whore. The good girl prides herself on being virtuous, though the price may be sexual deprivation and repression, and the bad girl often cannot escape the stigma attached to activities many men openly boast about. Both can be raped.

+The stigma of being raped: "keep it to yourself." Psychiatrists, husbands, female and others find the victim guilty.

The abused as guilty <sup>49</sup>

+The virgin: loss of virginity the most tragic aspect when the rapist shouts: "You are a naughty girl. BAD GIRL."

+ Accepting getting raped after a struggle.

+ The paralysis of the victim.

## SOLUTIONS

+ Rape from the victims perspective with the performance of texts (as Kane does from the very beginning with her *Unpublished Monologues*, the roots of her plays) as an act of sexual violence and many others, such as Robbie Mccualey in *Sally's Rape*) to facilitate the eradication of rape.

+Go on with studies on victimhood, to create as Nicolas Sarkozy suggested a "*juge pour les victimes*"<sup>50</sup> in general for any kind of victims, as rape and torture were not distinguished from one another as acts of violence.

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<sup>49</sup>The whole play of 4.48 *Psychosis* is an example of abused as guilty.

<sup>50</sup>Eliacheff C. & Soulez D. (2007). *Le temps des victimes*. Ed. Albin Michel, pp. 16.

### 4.3 Rape in Kane's Plays

C A fourteen year old to steal my virginity  
on the moor and rape me till I come. (178)

We need circles of predation to build life and to write tragedies. From the Greek and Roman tragedies to Shakespeare, to nowadays. Rape is as important in Sarah Kane as it is in *Titus Andronicus* by Shakespeare. In Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* Lavinia suffers mutilation and rape. Her torture provides the explicit and exquisite *dénouement* and centrepiece of the play in question.

However, rape was and is a taboo topic for discussion. Rape also is a difficult subject for any woman to write about. When Kane wrote about these horrendous experiences in one of the monologues, *Comic Monologue*, the incredulity of the experience made that a tutor at Bristol considered her essays only as pornographic.

The five plays in Kane involve rape. These rapes are visual in *Blasted*, in *Phaedra's love* and also in *Cleansed* (i.e. the scene Ten in *Cleansed* when Grace is raped as well as beaten, 132). In *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis* they are not visualized, they are narrated:

C A fourteen year old to steal my virginity  
on the moor and rape me till I come. (178)

.... fuck you for making me feel shit about myself.  
(215)

Here rape is used as a control mechanism to keep the victim in line, to be docile, submissive and obedient and as a sex-role dominant restricted to our own culture.

From Kane's plays, we can see how rape is an intercourse imposed on a person, woman or man, against their wishes. This intercourse must involve some penetrations, but not necessarily ejaculation, and anal or oral penetration by the penis. Although Kane does not develop this intercourse in depth and in detail, it is supposed, in the sense that these are theatre plays not essays on the politics of rape. In the same way, she does not develop the forcible intercourse imposed by a husband on his wife or the cases where by virtue of being unconscious, drugged, asleep, or in some comparable state, the woman or man, is in no

position to consent to the act and they consent and many other cases. However, in all Kane's plays there is an allusion to rape, to violation. There is a rapist, someone whose objective is the nullifying of a human person, someone who chooses, who carries the government of a life. Because by means of rape the reins of our life are lost. However, in Kane, there is a boomerang effect, those who rape are raped at the same time as Ian is raped by the Soldier, or raped by death in the form of suicide as in *Phaedra's case*.

The heroic rapist in the classic Greek myths as we have seen before here is going to appear as torturer, abuser and perpetrator. The use of rape, in Kane, is an expression of manhood as well as an indication of the property, as we see in the concept of women in *Comic Monologue* and as, I have said before, a mechanism of social control for keeping women (victim) in line. Besides, rape is an actual fact in the private and public fantasies of the men who dominate and define culture and it is shown in Kane's plays, for example, Theseus rapes Strophe and he cuts her throat in *Phaedra's Love*.

Kane deals with rape not only trying to destroy the ancient myth of heroism, nor as a war situation, nor as an ethnic phenomenon, or a lower-class mob but to depict these feared abusers of women, of victims (men, homosexual), setting a new attitude towards rape, permanent and hidden in our culture. As a revision of roles in our civilized processes, where a guiltless freedom to rape appears in *Comic Monologue*, in Ian or the Soldier in *Blasted*. The homosexual rape scene in *Cleansed* is intended to horrify viewers by showing her furious conclusions on this topic of rape, showing that a blind eye is turned against rape.

To conclude, if Kane puts violence "in our faces" it is to make us react, to make us question values and although Kane's theatre has been defined as aimless, brutish, barren, cannibalistic, prurient, diseased and terror-stricken, we need this moral kicking. She touches a nerve, prompting us to serious anxieties. She shows rape from the victims perspective in order to facilitate the eradication of rape itself.

#### **4.4 Cate, the Victim who Accepts Rape**

As we have seen, Kane provides real evidence, especially in *Blasted* of rape, the rape of women. Women are taught to be desirable in much the same way men are conditioned to be sexually aggressive. Women have been taught to be passive and submissive, and what more passive, submissive role can be imagined that the rape victim? Besides, before embarking this study, I analysed why rape victims enjoy being raped and why a high

percentage experience orgasm and pleasure. The conclusion is forcible rape, according to restrictive moral attitudes, disappears if the victim has experienced pleasure. Cate is a victim who experiences pleasure.

Ostermeier, the German director, described in an interview how he was "struck by how the relationship between Ian and Cate echoes that between the Austrian Natasha Kampush and her kidnapper" (Halliburton, 2006). (This was a current news item: Natascha had escaped from a cellar in Austria, after being held captive there by an older man for eight years).

Kane continuously parodies love rituals through her presentation of Ian and Cate's relationship. Kane shows her knowledge of manipulative communications when she depicts the relationship between Ian and Cate as a double-bind relation with a long history. In this play the case of Ian makes clear that not all rapists appear or behave as if they are insane. Ian changes back and forth between insults and promises of love in order to make Cate sleep with him. The expression of love becomes an empty ritual, because it is used as emotional blackmail. Ian says "I love you" to Cate nine times in *Blasted* in various contexts in order to manipulate her. As Graham Saunders has pointed out, Ian presents a bouquet of flowers for Cate in only a "hallow gesture" (2002b:128) as well. Kane's parody of love rituals reaches its height with the mock seduction in scene two when Cate kisses Ian, undoes his clothes, performs oral sex on him and finally bites his penis in a possible act of revenge for the sexual assault she undergoes during the night (28-31) where Ian expressed the love emotion by being violently aggressive against Cate. Thus, the words "love" and "making love" convey the way we want to see such relationships and acts. But sometimes the reality is that of "making hate," and "hate" would be a more valid description of the relationship, because here, not only did Cate not want to have sex with him at that time, but he also forced her to have sex in a way that was painful and outside of their usual "love/making" practices. This is the imposition of the assaulter that Kane emphasizes with the brute terrorism of Ian in his reiterated acts of rape towards Cate.

The dynamics of violence often involve a rapist who appropriated the victim's subjectivity. Acts of violence transform human interaction into a struggle for power. The rapist usurps the victim's body, thus, intimate violence results as a physical and psychological disorganization of the victim's self. The violated self needs to find a way in a world that has become chaotic. Therefore, violence has the capacity to destroy not only the form of the victim's body but the familiar form of understanding through which that victim



constructs himself (or herself) a subject. Thus, Cate bears the experiences because, as Saunders has remarked, Cate's Christian faith seems to sustain her throughout the play (Saunders, 2002<sup>a</sup>:22-3;166). Moreover, it induces her to take action and reverse the traditional gender roles. For instance, Cate removes the bullets from Ian's gun before handing it to him. When he tries to shoot himself because of this she says: "Fate, see. You're not meant to do it. God" (57). Cate is saving the blinded Ian's life in a ridiculous and yet touching way, for her violated self needs to find a way in this same world that has become chaotic, (as has been said before). Besides, through the play, Cate tries to retain her personal freedom and spiritual independence by either dismissing Ian with manipulative statements of laughter, evasive comments and questions or by disrupting the smooth procedure of love rituals. When Ian tells Cate he loves her for the sixth time, she retaliates: "I don't love you" (24). In this way Kane uses the relationship between Ian and Cate to discuss conflicting desires and fears and desires as well as gender power relations. She poses questions about which fears and desires are necessary for survival and where neurosis starts.

Ian is a rapist, an accepted rapist. Cate is seen as an attribute of Ian's property. Cate lives in a permanent state of intimidation. By means of this weapon of intimidation Cate is raped. When Ian is nearly exhausted (by another rape perpetrated by the Soldier on him) Cate begins to move freely without fear of him. The previous position of power that Ian held was a testimony of male hierarchy, a cultural hierarchy where the very possibility of rape serves to show the victim's pain rather than the violator's pleasure, but at the same time in order to capture the victim's pain in words, a certain kind of representation in violator's pleasure is necessary:

**Cate** You hurt me.

**Ian** No, I love you. (17)

With this declaration of love, after having raped Cate, Ian testifies his pleasure.

Violators dehumanize their intended victims and look on them not as people but as inanimate objects. Cate is a victim of violence. The unfamiliar picture of a creature who seems less human than an animal, less subject than object. Cate is the object of Ian's desire, a body without singularity. She is a raped girl, a body deprived of a cultural essential part. Cate is a female as a prey, a rape victim that brings out the worst of Ian. Ian's behaviour is as these rapist men just by having an available female body on the road, in a hotel (here, Scene One

begins in: *A very expensive hotel room in Leeds - the kind that is so expensive it could be anywhere in the world*). Besides, according to Ian's it was Cate's fault that he had been lowered to rape her - Cate You were horrible to me./ Ian I wasn't (16). Because, women often take responsibility when men treat them as prey, because they are thought to make themselves attractive to men. But if they become victims of sexual assault, they are immediately suspected of incitement or provocation. No man is ever guilty. If he did something bad, it must have been invited.

Consciously or unconsciously, most women alter their behaviour to lessen the possibility of being attacked. Some dress drably, look straight ahead when walking, never speak with strangers, do not hitchhike, do not travel alone, do not walk alone at night. Women are taught to distrust and to be wary from the time they are very young. Girls are encouraged to stay indoors, while boys are sent out to explore the world. Some girls rebel and suffer the consequences. They can be raped on different occasions. After being raped once, then again and again, as it happened with Marilyn Monroe (the famous actress), who was violated when she was 12 years old at High School. From then on several times. But in her case she was considered to be provoking men, mainly at the end of her life, when she was really unbalanced. But the fact raises this question: Is the prey really responsible for predatory behaviour? Is Cate responsible for Ian's rape?

If women are alone, very desperate and in need of whatever they could give them, some men just take advantage of them. Consequently, if women are alone and available, men use them. Therefore, there is nothing perverted, it is just their normal way of relating to women. Even in marriage the possibility of a rape is allowed. Then the victim incorporates the hatred for having herself allowed to get raped: Ian Cate, love, I'm trying to look after you. Stop you getting hurt./ Cate You hurt me. / Ian No, I love you. (17).

The rapist in the purest autonomy creates a narrative of violence on the victimized body: Cate You bit me. It's still bleeding (32). This example shows the brutality of the act of violation and the brute-like characteristics of its victim. This is a culminating description of the rape where the body that is the object of erotic pleasure becomes the object of violence.

#### **4.5 The Character of Cate in Kane's Opinions**

I seem to have a completely different take to the rest of the world, which is I don't think Cate is simple. Cate constantly surprises me. She has this very idealized images of what sex should be, but it's not

from a position of naiveté – she does actually have sex. She's slept with Ian before. She's had other boyfriends. She's going out with this bloke called Shaun. All right, she hasn't slept with him, but she's going to. I just don't see her as simple. I see her as possibly the most intelligent of them all.

The thing that stops Cate being a stereotype are those surprising things. She has sex with people which you don't expect, and I think everything is grounded specifically. I don't think there's any aspect of her supposed simpleness which isn't grounded. It might have been an unconscious thing because I was reading a lot of Shakespeare at the time, and I also read *Waiting for Godot*. Okay, Vladimir and Estragon aren't fools, but they're clowns who are capable of massive insight. (Saunders, 1995)

Yes, I think Cate's very fucking stupid. What's she doing in that hotel room in the first place? Of course, she's going to get raped, and it's utterly tragic this happens to her. I did have nights during rehearsals of *Blasted* when I would go home and cry and say, "How could I create such a beautiful woman in order for her to be so abused?." I really did feel a bit sick and depraved. Part of that had to do with the fact that there was no sort of overwhelming sense that Cate came out on top. Had there been I'm sure I would have felt completely exonerated. But I didn't- and I don't think in the end these people do come out on top. (Rebellato, 1998).

## 4.6 Ian : The Rapist

Rape reduces its victim to the status of an animal and then the very body that it has mutilated: Soldier rapes Ian (32). Here, the mutation of roles is produced, now Ian has become a victim. However, to arrive to this last process he has committed a number of atrocities towards Cate and maybe towards his wife Stella, who is only named in the play.

### Kane's Vision on Ian:

The person I based Ian on was a man I knew a long time ago: very violent and very racist, sexist, homophobic – really unpleasant. He was going around with this whole mass of rage about all sorts of things which he directed towards women, but was also equally directed at female identified men. (Saunders, 1995)

I could see that other people would say that Ian was a bastard, and I knew they would. But I think that he's extremely funny. The reason that I wrote his character was because of this terrible dilemma that was thrown up for me, with a man that I knew was dying of lung cancer. He was extremely funny, but started telling me the most appalling racist jokes I'd ever heard in my life. I was completely torn, because they were very funny and I'd not heard them before. I thought he was awful and I was glad he was dying. And it was because he was dying of lung cancer that I thought this poor man is going to be

dead and he probably wouldn't be saying this. And it set up all kinds of turmoil in me (Rebellato, 1998)

In one interview Kane was asked a question whether she thought Ian was redeemed or punished by the end of the play:

Ian is deified in a way I didn't realize until I saw the play performed for the first time. I wasn't around for the technical rehearsal because they said, "Don't come in. You'll get bored and frustrated." However, I went in for the technical run later on in the day. And when I watched the blood being washed away by the rain I saw how Christ-like the image is – which isn't to say that Ian isn't punished: he is of course, he dies, and he finds that the thing he's ridiculed – life after death – really does exist. And that life is worse than where he was before. It really is hell (Rebellato, 1998).

In the same interview, Kane is asked about the nature of the relationship between Ian and the Soldier, and whether they are perhaps one and the same:

I suppose there is some of culpability implied because the Soldier is English, and he is a kind of personification of Ian's psyche in some sense; and it was very deliberate thing. I thought that the person who comes crashing through the door actually has to make Ian look like a baby in terms of violence – and I think that's successful.

It's difficult, because when you look at what Ian does to Cate it's utterly appalling. And you think, "I can't image anything worse." And then something worse happens. I find it very hard to say, "God, what a horrible thing to do," even with Ian. In some sense, he's acted upon as much as he acts upon Cate. In a sense he's acted upon by his own nature – it's this thing rotting him from the inside, which he feeds. (Saunders, 1995)

### **Ian's Rape in *Blasted*, According to Kane:**

It's interesting the way the scene was perceived. I was reading all these reviews and thinking, "But that's not what I wrote at all"! What was being described was that a soldier come in and randomly rapes Ian. And what they kept ignoring was the fact that the Soldier does it with a gun to his head, which Ian has done to Cate earlier – and he's crying his eyes out as he does it. I think both these things have changed that theatrical image completely. (Saunders, 1995)

## **5. Dismembering the Body: Tragic Mutilations in Kane's Plays**



*Cleansed* (mutilations and sexual surgery). Photo taken at the National Theatre São João, Porto, December 2008.

The "body" is a problematic term to begin with, because in recent years it has been so widely used with varying degrees of looseness and precision. Indeed, we have reasons to think the body itself has been used in most cultures and at different times as a figure with which to think out the relationship between individual bodies and that number of bodies called society. Furthermore, that body is always inscribed with and used to think about social relationships. Even in modern cultures, the body is not so much a natural object as an image or sign we use to understand ourselves as selves. We carry a body around in our heads that governs the ways in which we represent the world to ourselves.

Psychoanalysis has become a discourse centred around the question of "body cuts," starting with Freud's theory of the castration complex. This theory relies heavily on an acceptance of the figurative dismembering of the body. The body most deeply implicated in this symbolic dismembering of a woman. Thus, in psychoanalysis the body is the human prototype for all separation to come, it is the place where primal divisions take place. In short, the body is the locus of dismemberment.

In order to understand the body, in order to speak about the body we must fragment it. The body is figured in the discourses of literature, cinema, and psychoanalysis as a symbolized object dismembered from the real body but inseparable from the action of dismembering that determines its representation.

Psychoanalysis has in other words become a discourse centred around the question of body divisions, starting with Freud's theory of the castration complex. This theory relies heavily on an acceptance of the figurative separation of the body. The body most deeply implicated in this symbolic dismembering is that of woman (as Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus* or Grace in *Cleansed*); her figurative dismemberment is the basis of the Freudian theories of castration, decapitation, and fetishism, the foundation upon which the principal building block of psychoanalysis, the Oedipus complex, rests.

It is difficult to think of a Renaissance tragedy in which at least one woman is not threatened with mutilation, rape or murder. Her torture and death provide the explicit and exquisite dénouement and centrepiece of the play in question. Yet, despite concerted efforts to historicize the literary past, criticism has done little to account either for the pervasiveness of such violence or for the gender of its victims. Thus, the body of an aristocratic female was the centrepiece of spectacles of violence on stage, and had everything, in the Elizabethan period, to do with the Queen herself. On the Jacobean stage, however, the aristocratic female having acquired this usage had to be both different from the king's body and yet essential to the purity of the aristocratic community. For example, on the Jacobean stage we see aristocratic women punished for possessing the very features that empowered such characters in Elizabethan romantic comedy.

Kane expresses her fascination for tragic mutilation in all her plays, even in 4.48 *Psychosis*,

A dotted line on the throat

CUT HERE (226)

Their deepest mystery is in all of them: flesh in pain, flesh deformed, flesh provoking anxiety as in *Crave*, devastatingly. As in William Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, (the most gruesome play by this author, although it was criticized as immature and sensational dramaturgy for its bloodbaths centuries ago). It is important to review Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* in order to understand Kane and this part entitled "Dismembering the body" referred to Kane's plays, mainly in *Blasted*, *Phaedra's Love* and *Cleansed*, where the mutilation is physically visible as in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*. In *Titus Andronicus*, Lavinia is raped, has her tongue cut out and her hands cut off. Besides, Lavinia's body serves not only to encode her impotence but to represent the intertwining of sexuality and

criminality. Thus, Lavinia's broader meaning in *Titus Andronicus* is to signify that historical time when violent abuse of the body served as proof and where the body itself was meaning. The particularly troublesome figure of Lavinia, her mutilated body blazoning forth her own victimization and visually uniting scenes in which limbs are lopped, entrails burned, trunks decapitated, hands amputated, throats slit, and bones pulverized. In this context of horror, the violence to Lavinia may seem relatively indistinguishable from other bloodsheds that signal the disintegration of the Roman state and its aristocratic families. Besides, *Titus Andronicus* reflects a time in legal and dramatic history producing truth and justice where the body, especially as it sustains violent abuse, is an "honest" signifier. Set in the gap between the invisible, secret crime of Lavinia's rape and the emphatically visible public form of trial by ordeal, the play shows its elements in transit: exposing the ambiguities that undermine ordeals as proofs of crime and methods of justice, it concludes by pointing towards a judicial successor, trial by jury. Despite Shakespeare's exposure of the ambiguities at the core of crime, punishment, and proof, and despite the problems of secrecy and visibility dramatized in Lavinia's body, spectators are consoled at the end by what is "apparent," a *consolation* itself weakened in advance when Saturninus reassured himself by taking the guilt of Quintus and Martius as "apparent."

Within this structure of problematizing the apparent, Lavinia mounts no challenge to the patriarchy that identifies her as the site of political rivalry nor the legal structure that identifies her as a territory for expropriation. Yet despite her silence, Lavinia is meaningful, harkening back to a fading time when not to speak was not only to possess but also indeed to be meaningful.

The tragic poetic operations of dismemberment used by Shakespeare in *Titus Andronicus* are used in a way by Kane in her plays. Thus, both bodies of work in which the characters are often represented by means of their poeticized and fragmented bodies. Both authors are poets transfigured into surgeons whose love for cutting bodies is transmuted into poetic operations of dissection. Here we will see how Kane elaborates the use of pain and violence, and not only sexual violence in her body mutilations.

## **5.1 Mutilations in *Blasted*, *Phaedra's Love* and *Cleansed***

Dictionary definitions are always helpful in making things clearer. The definition of "mutilate" is: to make imperfect by excising or altering parts. Mutilation is making imperfect.

There are a few listed definitions of art. The first is: human effort to imitate, supplement, alter, or counteract the work of nature. The second definition is: the conscious production or arrangement of sounds, colours, forms, movements, or other elements in a manner that affects the sense of beauty, specifically the production of the beautiful in a graphic or plastic medium (American Heritage...). Here is the loophole: altering what is natural is part of a definition for both "mutilate and art." Therefore, mutilation can be art. However, art is not "making imperfect." Why is body mutilation viewed so differently than many other art forms? Body mutilation is a form of art that should be accepted, as so many others are. Thus, in theatre the mutilation of the body symbolises the change in order to guide the horrors on stage. Consequently, in the following plays we are going to witness these mutilations in order to achieve what Immanuel Kant called the Sublime:

To call sublime in nature there is such an absence of anything leading to particular objective principles and corresponding forms of nature that it is rather in its chaos, or in its wildest and most irregular disorder and desolation, provided it gives signs of magnitude and power, that nature chiefly excites the ideas of sublime. (301)

Thus, according to Kant, chaotic and wild nature incites the Sublime because it also promises a grandeur beyond its unruliness.

### **5.1.1 Mutilations and Eating the Body in *Blasted* in Order to Be Fed**

The Soldier sucks out and eats Ian's eyes, describing it in terms of what was done to Col, his girlfriend: "He ate her eyes./ Poor bastard/ Poor fucking bastard" (50), in order to show a change of position and state on stage. Likewise, Kane's representation of eating rituals is closely interlinked with religious rituals, so that the acts depicted often also have a religious connotation. After the mutilation of Ian, when he is blinded and helpless, Cate's faith is going to sustain her and so she leaves the hotel and brings back the baby, which she buries under the floor after it dies. While Cate is away, the second time and offstage exchanges sex for food, Ian "*eats the baby*" (60). A Christian reading of the swallowing of the bodies allows for an element of hope, since the baby becomes the "holy child who is symbolically transformed into the Host just as Jesus," body is transformed into the Host in the Holy Communion. Ian can then die with relief, but he also lives on as a baby and is fed



by Cate who takes up the function of the mother. In a production that emphasises the religious connotations of the last scene, Ian can be represented as Christ-like when the blood on his mutilated body is being washed away by the rain, while Cate can be represented as a *mater dolorosa* (Brusberg-Kiermeier, 2004: 362).

Furthermore, the staging of eating in *Blasted* displays a relationship of the characters to their own physicality that is more grotesque for example than the characters in Ravenhill's *Shopping and Fucking* (1996), who exclusively live on fast food and microwave meals. Whereas the unseen hotel Yorker brings food at the beginning of *Blasted*, it is the woman, Cate, who finally provides the food and feeds Ian like a baby, appropriating in my view religious rituals. In the beginning of *Shopping and Fucking* the play's only female character, Lulu, similarly follows the gender stereotype of the feeding mother or wife by providing microwave food. However, at the end of the play, Ravenhill has all the characters take turns in feeding each other, thus evoking the positive function that mutual meals can still have for the community spirit (Ravenhill, 1996: 89), in this sense also reinstating the power of ritual, and alluding to the performative nature of religion Bond says: "Drama shares its ultimate with religion. Religion is merely theatre claiming to be real. It does this in order to control reality more effectively" (Saunders, 2002a: 190).

### **5.1.2 The Pain of Castration: Hippolytus, his Lacerated Body**

Sigmund Freud's castration theory (and Jacques Lacan's theories on the construction of the subject) can be used to place the role of the fragmented body in *Phaedra's Love*. According to Freud the loss of an overvalued or "loved objects" causes a kind of mourning pain. Freud has widely explored the concept of mutilation with his theory of castration, based on a scenario in which the little boy fears his virility because masturbatory pleasure is castrated as a punishment. Moreover, the umbilical cut is considered for Freud the fundamental cut to the understanding of all subsequent psychological traumas (Freud, 1949: 135). French psychoanalyst Lacan insists on the notion of cuts when he analyses the construction of the subject, it is coming into the signifying world from "nothing" to something "divided" (Lacan, 1977: 91). Therefore, Hippolytus comes into the signifying worlds from nothing to something "divided" when he is castrated as a punishment for his crime. In this way, his body is the locus of the mutilation that gives a significance to his life.

The symbolic scene of castration and mutilation may suggest the level of consciousness in Hippolytus about his fears of his own sense of masculinity, which in this

anti-classic hero means "no fears." Here the mutilation is not an element of tragedy, because Hippolytus does not construct his masculine identity upon the sole possession of the penis. His mutilated body serves to his own condition of punishment. Thus, Hippolytus is punished by the fact of castration. This fundamental body alteration destabilizes his phallic role, although in his case, as it has been said, he is indifferent to his possession of the penis to base his role of man on.

Although Hippolytus endures the pain of mutilation, of castration with the heroism of the Classic Hippolytus (Euripides, Seneca's, Racine's), here he is not a classical tragic hero because nearly all his tendencies are not acceptable to the ethos of society. These impunities establish a kind of repulsion of an emotional relationship between Hippolytus and the spectator, or what is called "empathy" here has disappeared, because Hippolytus' attitudes (he constantly masturbates and casts his semen into a sock) cause "*hamartia*"<sup>51</sup> in us. We do not feel love, tenderness of desire for him.

Moreover, following this idea Hippolytus is punished because her "ethos" is not in harmony with what society regards as desirable. What society regards as conflict must be destroyed.

The same impunity that causes Hippolytus to be punished makes him to feel free. The punishment in itself liberates him. His past days, instead of being delightful are an atrocious nauseating existence marked by boredom. The boredom of the modern upper class. Then, when the torture is inflicted on him, this is a moment of pleasure. The ferocious vultures tearing his body apart, his delicious flesh of mutilated body by punishment represents a masochistic tendency that defines him as a victim, a passive victim, who accepts the suffering and in a way enjoys it. Here Hippolytus and his morbid reality of castration, his body feminized by castration is a release of pleasure. Pain that sets him free. His masochistic desire to suffer-double suffering of his body and mind-turning horror into pleasure, a very Christian value for eternal salvation. His body must expire in pain in order to redeem his sinful nature, in order for his soul to have an eternal protection. The quantity of excitement present in Hippolytus' mind defines a state of pleasure for him. The situation of loss from the cut is a situation of pleasure. This fluctuation of pain and pleasure transforms the end of this

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<sup>51</sup> According to Aristotle, in the ethos of the tragic protagonist all the tendencies must be good, except one. Only one trait must be bad, only one passion, one habit, will be against the law. This bad characteristic is called *hamartia*. It is also known as the tragic flaw. It is the only "impurity" that exists in the character. *Hamartia* is the only thing that can and must be destroyed, so that the whole of the character's ethos may conform to the ethos of the society. In this confrontation of tendencies, of ethos, the *hamartia* causes the conflict: it is the only trait that is not in harmony with what society regards as desirable. (Boal, 34)

play in one of the most beautiful. Castration for him is "sweet torture," and a metaphor of freedom.

The missing penis and members represent in Kane's *Hippolytus* the formation of a raised level of spirituality. Depriving him of the organ for sexual pleasure, *Hippolytus* corrects with a level of mysticism. At the same time altering *Hippolytus* by means of castration and mutilation (*Hippolytus*' stomach is supposed to have been cut open and his penis has been cut off and thrown on to a barbecue, so his genitals and innards are fed to dogs) shows that Kane had a deep sense of puritan religion based on punishment for sexual attitudes and crimes.

Therefore, the castration and mutilation in *Hippolytus* are the crucial elements of this play. *Hippolytus* deprived of his organ for desire and sexual satisfaction. The mutilated body of *Hippolytus* contributes to poetize the end of the play:

<b>Hippolytus</b>	Vultures
	<i>(He manages a smile)</i>
	If there could have been more moments like this.
<b>Hippolytus</b>	<i>dies.</i>
	<i>A vulture descends and begins to eat his body. (102-103)</i>

*Hippolytus*' pain of mutilation is transformed into a poetic fantasy. He absorbs the pain of castration and thanks to it, he is redeemed, mainly by himself:

If there could have been more moments like this. (102)

In conclusion, these circumstances of castration show a masochistic image where *Hippolytus* absorbs the pain of mutilation with the joy of the vultures. The tragic duality of the scene becomes horror and reflection on the destruction of an agonizing man. Besides, *Hippolytus*' final is like a Christ figure whose body must expire in pain in order to redeem man's sinfulness. However, his own masochistic desire to suffer represents a desperate real call for protection, for love, for solace.

### 5.1.3 The Brute Pain in *Cleansed*<sup>52</sup>

*Cleansed* is perhaps Kane's most violent work because it offers various amputations, rats carrying away body parts and a pole forced a few inches through an anus. Thus taking this violence into consideration, in this section, I have decided to include the aspect of "*carne levare*" which is the Latin name for "carnival" or "mardi gras" "greasy Tuesday" to analyse this play as the emergence of the grotesque body, accepted in Carnival and restricted in bourgeois life. *Cleansed* is "carnavalesque" in the sense that it is symbolic, and practices ritualistically with the body. However, at the same time like play points at a strange carnivalesque diaspora, by means of its body transgressions and mutilations<sup>53</sup>. At the same the title alludes to the topic of purification after this strange carnivalesque diaspora.

One of the essential ways of describing a carnival focuses upon the inversion ritual. Carnavalesque inversion involves a ritualised display of the impure, sometimes with grotesque lines, for example, when Robin dresses as Grace or Grace wears a crude penis and Carl has punitive amputations. Here in *Cleansed*, Grace becomes her brother. Carl recognizes the burden of claiming a love without end when he experiences his own physical limits; Rod, who says that "There's only now" (142), proffers an image of love transcending death and life's suffering. As these pairs cross, another pairing emerges between Grace and Carl when Tinker sews the latter's phallus on to Grace. At the play's end, Grace wears men's clothes, Carl women's. One smiles; one cries. They hold each other. But still an empty middle

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<sup>52</sup> *Cleansed*: mixture of eroticism and pain. The "university" setting in this play, with its explicit emphasis on borders and boundaries- where all scenes take place within a perimeter, either within a specific room of the university or, as a repeating stage direction reads "just inside the perimeter fence of the university" mocks a critical discourse, rendering it virulent. (Kane claimed that her MA in Playwriting at Birmingham University "nearly destroyed her as a writer" (Stepheson and Langridge, 1997: 129). Stepheson, H. and N. Langgridge (1997), *Reason and Reason: Women Playwrights on Playwriting* ( London: Methuen). Tinker, the brutal dealer and "Doctor" of *Cleansed*, is also a critic, an arbiter of culture: he reigns over a literally enclosed university, violently monitoring the discursive habits of its residents. The character Tinker, reportedly and believably, earned his name from the journalist Jack Tinker - the ultimately official "bystander" or spectator - who first catapulted *Blasted* into a news story with his review titles "the disgusting feast of filth."

<sup>53</sup> Carnavalesque is a term used in the English translations of works written by the Russian critic Mikhail Bakhtin, which refers to a literary mode that subverts and liberates the assumptions of the dominant style or atmosphere through humour and chaos. Bakhtin traces the origins of the carnivalesque to the concept of carnival, itself related to the Feast of Fools, a medieval festival originally of the sub-deacons of the cathedral, held about the time of the Feast of the Circumcision (1 January), in which the humbler cathedral officials burlesqued the sacred ceremonies, releasing "the natural lout beneath the cassock." Also Bakhtin derives carnival and the carnivalization of literature from the reign of the "Serio-comical" with the examples of Socratic dialogues and Menippean satire. Within the Socratic dialogue carnival affects all people into the behaviour and rituals in to the carnivalistic life, as in every individual is affected by carnival, meaning everyone is a constant participant of carnival. In the base of examples from the Menippean satire, the relativity of joy that subverts and creates a syncretic pageant that with humour and grotesque it weds and combines the sacred with the profane. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carnavalesque>

remains between them. Thus, Kane in *Cleansed* correlates the features of the carnival sign with the deepest feeling of exclusion by means of emptiness between them.

This feeling of exclusion by means of a Carnival sign can be joined to Freud's theories on castration to analyse the play. By giving Grace a masculine identity Graham is castrated. Thus, this symbolic sign of castration on stage, is explored in Freud's theories, in the sense that the little boy fears for his virile member and is castrated as a punishment for masturbatory pleasures. Graham is punished by his overdose.

Grace is a woman affected by the mutilation involved in the castration complex and she eliminates her genitals that inspire her feelings of difference from her brother. Her genitals are destroyed, as if an abnormal secretion of the mucous membrane of her vagina were a source of disgust. The result is that her mutilated body faces her inferiority against her brother and her deficient body demands the "missing penis." She experiments a pain of castration and this pain conducts her behaviour. (Although Kane transforms this pain into desire where Grace and Graham are the object of and resolution to each other's desire. Consequently, each serves in large part to constitute the other's subjectivity, and it becomes difficult to determine where one ends and the other begins).<sup>54</sup>

By virtue of the modification in her brother's body, a body feminized by castration, her body transforms into his. The mutilated body of Graham offers a metamorphosis to Grace. His dismembered body becomes the allegory represented by the fantasy of castration. Graham's phallus is part of Grace.<sup>55</sup> By surgery, she has a prosthetic penis. The mutilated body of Graham, gives Grace the possibility to get over her castrated condition, since, according to Freud a woman's body has suffered a castration, due to the missing penis. Grace's body is the metamorphosis of Graham's disfigured body. The exchange of body and identity:

**Grace/Graham** Body perfect, (149)

It reveals that the traumatic separation (Graham dies of overdose) is superated.

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<sup>54</sup> Graham and Grace have been together in an incestuous relationship truly in love (in page 120 Graham and Grace reach the heights of sexual fulfilment and Kane represents this by means of the synaesthetic subjectivity: *A sunflower burst through the floor and grows above their heads*)). Here the notion that love does not end with death is treated in their relationship. In this sense Grace's actions continue to be motivated by her love for him.

<sup>55</sup> I had the opportunity of attending to the performance of *Cleansed* in Oporto, December, 2008, at the theatre Sao Joao, by the Polish company directed by Kristoff Warilowsky. This scene and also the previous one about a sunflower burst through (...) were very achieved.

**Grace/Graham** (....)

Here now.  
Safe on the other side and here.

**Graham.**

(A long silence)

Always be here. (150)

Graham's mutilated body transmutes into Grace's body, so Grace crosses into Graham as Graham enters her body. As Grace wishes to reach out for her masculine self, she accommodates the presence of another sex alongside hers. By this means, she feels the locus of her brother's pain in hers. Her breasts are mutilated by means of surgery. Grace is transmuted into Graham by cutting, hacking and carving. Her cultural femininity becomes the ambiguous subliminal feeling associated with the vision of the female body. Pain and deformation. Grace is mutilated. She loses her breast. The painful transition is an aesthetic component in the play,<sup>56</sup> where pain becomes a metaphoric means by which Kane passes from her body to the other: her brother's. It is through pain (victim) where Grace achieves her "*quantum of solace*."

In conclusion, Grace, in origin a mutilated sex, according to Freud, becomes a man, his brother's penis becomes hers by means of surgery. Her own desire to become a different body, her brother's body is, as Freud's fable of castration goes, a way to recover the lost penis. Castration made by a surgeon: "a man who loves to cut, and hack and carve":

**Grace/Graham** (....)

Thank you Doctor (150)

The problematic status of the self in *Cleansed* highlights the body as metaphor and medium. The body becomes other bodies (Grace, Robin... the mutilations...) bodies of the other. Grace is a body prone to change, to destruction and reconstruction. Her body demonstrates the shift from medium to metaphor. Metaphor of unmaking a body to reveal *a geste brutal*, and continue to call into question the nature of the subject. Robin is the castrated hanged man, and the destruction of his body constructs his identity. There is much

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<sup>56</sup> (Seen in Warilowsky's, Oporto, 8th December 2008, Sao Joao Theatre).

excitement in an inexplicable attraction for the mystery of destruction in Robin. He is "*carne levare*" in Kane's religious way:

**Robin** *takes off his tights (Grace's) and makes a noose.*

*He gets a chair and stands on it.*

*He attaches the noose to the ceiling and puts his head through. He stands in silence for a few moments.*

*(....)*

*The chair is pulled from under Robin.*

*He struggles.*

**Graham** *sits motionless under Robin's swinging body. (144/145)*

In *Cleansed*, in scene four, after Carl's spoken betrayal, Tinker cuts out Carl's tongue and makes him swallow Rod's ring, then Tinker cuts off his hands. When Carl performs a dance of love for Rod, Tinker cuts off his feet. As with the anal impaling, each punishment is a direct violent representation of the corresponding "crime." The body's desire to inscribe itself into the world is answered by the inscription of violence onto the body. Kane puts Carl's mutilation in systematic order starting from the head and ending at the feet, so that the series of mutilations acquire the form of a ritual itself. However, Rod lags at these mutilations (136) and decides to die for Carl:

**Rod** (...) "Me. Do it to me. Not to Carl, not my lover,  
not my friend, do it to me." I'd gone, first boat  
out here. Death isn't the worst thing they can do  
to you. (...)

Rod repeats his love vows, but changes them so that they now echo Carl's earlier extreme, romantic version: "I will always love./ I will never lie to you./ I will never betray you./ On my life" (142). Carl's continuous suffering becomes a proof of his love for Rod, which in turn enables Rod to admit the special quality of their love and to sacrifice his life for Carl. After Carl makes love to him, Rod asks Carl to swallow the other ring as well, so that the rings are united inside Carl. As Saunders has pointed out, this swallowing of the second ring resembles taking the Sacrament (Saunders, 2002a: 98) and I would, therefore, argue that the systematic torturing of Carl, as well as the love rituals, can be read as a metaphor for the strengthening of their love, with the ability to lie and betray now removed.

Thus, the title *Cleansed* implies not only a cleansing from drugs or ethnic cleansing, but also a purification of love, a reduction of life to its essentials, and a triumph of mind and soul over the body, again a symbol of "carne levare."

## 6. Internal Violence: The Age of Anxiety

If Charles Baudelaire was an architect of modernity, Kane becomes the deep amorous torment to death itself. She suffered from depression, and the bouts became increasingly severe, as has been said. The preoccupations apparent in Kane's early monologues also permeate her later work, and the confessional form is one to which she returned in her last plays, *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis*. The persistent theme throughout the canon is a young woman struggling against confining expectations, the complexities of her identity and social interactions in terms of self-esteem, body image and eating disorders, and sexual politics – which, in part, may be related to a particular socio-historical context. This is a theme encapsulated in the overarching title of the monologues: *Sick*. These monologues, as we saw in previous chapters, each with its speaker named simply "Woman," express connections between the compulsion to purge her body of sperm after an abusive sexual encounter in *Comic Monologue* and the subsequent focus in *Starved* on bulimia, anorexia and hospitalization as an attempt at treatment. As a whole, the monologues present an overwhelming sense of a young woman growing up and facing the pressures of British society in the 1980s. The press was preoccupied with a date rape, scares about safety of the contraceptive pill and about the risk of infection. In the mid-late 1980s, HIV and AIDS were at the core of anxieties about sexual promiscuity. To be a young woman at this time was also to be implicated by media coverage of diet and body image, and of contested territory between sexual activity and feminist ideology. As we have seen Kane explores the latter very vividly in her third monologue *What She Said*.

Kane had her own tragic artistic icon in Ian Curtis, the lyricist and lead singer of Joy Division who committed suicide, giving her some sympathy with this fascination as it "become obvious that her life and work were being processed into the great Romantic legend of the tortured suicidal artist" (Ravenhill, 2006). Furthermore, *4.48 Psychosis* is based on her experiences of the condition and its treatments. Kenyon admits, "I pretend that *4.48 Psychosis* isn't a suicide note but it is. It is both a suicide note and something much greater than that" (Urban, 2001: 65). This self-destructive act and the impulses towards it (suicide)



were and maybe they are very rooted in the Anglo-Saxon culture due to their inclination to introspection.<sup>57</sup>

Therefore language, with the internalisation of violence and its representation on stage and before us as written text, does not merely serve as a support, a bearer of a representation, but it becomes the message itself. Signs in Kane speak by themselves by means of their tonality, intonation and musicality. The rhythm in *Crave* for instance, prevails over its meaning, or rather, becomes its meaning. Violence is incarnated in the body of language as it is in *4.48 Psychosis*, but these aspects will be seen in the chapter referring to these plays and their language.

## 6.1 A Pure Portion of Anxiety<sup>58</sup>

La ciega identificación con lo deseado crea apego e impaciencia por poseer y retener lo deseado.  
(Calle, 45)

In all Kane's plays, there is a portion of anxiety and unease. For example, for Cate in *Blasted*, unease manifests itself most potently in her need to return to the man who abused and raped her.

When Kane begins *Phaedra's Love*, Phaedra is already in to thrall desire and unease. In her next work, *Cleansed*, unease and pain are considered because Rob cannot forgive Carl, but he also will not stop loving him. Although Graham dies in the first scene of the play, he continues to exist as a source of Grace's desire, the object of her love, an incestuous one, and a narration of unease through the play.

Flesh provoking anxiety: *Crave*, because the play offers a darker notion of love where we are crippled emotionally. Thus, the longest monologue A delivers reads like an aria to love (170). However, the love A felt was the one that destroyed C. *4.48 Psychosis* offers the unease's overpowering compulsion towards suicide, in the internal violence is a vivid testimony in every word of the play, although this internal violence is a shout for life:

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<sup>57</sup> This idea is commented by Leandro Fernández de Moratín, (the Spanish playwright whose work included *El sí de las niñas*) in his work entitled *Anotaciones sobre Inglaterra* written while he was spending a period of his life there before forming the Language Translation Office at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation in Madrid.

<sup>58</sup> The title is taken from Barthes, Roland (1979). *A Lover Discourse. Fragments*. London: Jonathan Cape, pp. 15.

Cuando alguien piensa en suicidarse, en realidad no quiere terminar con su vida, sino con su dolor (...). Por lo tanto, no existe idea pura de suicidio como creen muchos psiquiatras. No existe una conciencia de la inexistencia. (Cury, 162-163)

En el fondo, quien piensa en morir siente hambre y sed de vivir. Está buscando desesperadamente cómo destruir la angustia y no cómo terminar con su vida. (Ibid, 163)

## **7. The Role of the Phenomenon of Trauma in Kane's Plays**

My intention here is to understand and show how to understand this phenomenon because in less than twenty years the notion of psychological trauma has imposed itself on society in such a way as to become the central reality of violence.

A victim is the recognition of the experience of violence. The suffering establishes the ground. The victim stocks the violent imprint left in the memory, thus trauma. Trauma has become a major signifier of our age. It is our normal means of relating suffering to past violence. It is the scar that a tragic event leaves on an individual victim or on a witness – sometimes even on the perpetrator. It is also the collective imprint on a group of a historical experience that may have occurred decades, generations, or even centuries. Today we talk of rape and genocide, of torture and slavery, of terrorist attacks and natural disasters in the same language, both clinical and metaphorical, of trauma: one signifier for a plurality of signified. However, when considering this semantic field, we tend often to minimize two important elements. First, we forget that the notion we take so much for granted – that a person exposed to violence may become traumatized and so be recognized as a victim – is in fact quite a recent idea. Second, the understandable pathos attached to the violent events that cause trauma leads us to ignore the fact that social agents are not passive recipients of being "traumatized."

Consequently, in this section, I will demonstrate how the traumatic victims in Kane's plays are part of a culture that can be considered rooted in the "Empire of Trauma". At the same time, my purpose is to show how trauma has come to authenticate the suffering of the victims in her plays. As trauma provides the condition of victimhood, these victims are culturally and politically respectable, and trauma itself becomes a moral category. Hence, either moral judgments on the trivialization of trauma or indignant denunciation of a society of victims will be not found here. What will be found is my interest in the politics of reparation, of testimony and of proof that trauma, via Kane's plays, offers.

Today we are accustomed to psychiatrists being summoned to scenes of terrorist attacks, natural disasters, war, and other tragic events in order to care for the psychic trauma of victims – yet it has not always been so. The very idea of psychic trauma came into being only at the end of the nineteenth century and for a long time was treated with suspicion. The idea that tragic and painful events, whether individually or collectively experienced, leave marks on the mind that are then seen as "scars" by analogy to those left on the body, is just as easily accepted. However, twenty-five years ago the issues were not so clear-cut. Twenty-five years ago, when Kane started to write her unpublished monologues, the topic of trauma was not so widely accepted.

Trauma was really evoked outside of the closed circles of psychiatry and psychology. The victim, who in fact was rarely thought of as a "victim," was tarred as illegitimate; trauma was a suspect condition. Thus, within a few years the course of history has changed: now the victim is recognized as such and trauma is a legitimate status. It is this new condition of victimhood, established through the concept of trauma, which I will address in this chapter.

Trauma is often seen as inherently linked to modernity. Kevin Newark, for instance, drawing upon Walter Benjamin's groundbreaking work decided historically to interrupt once and for all the unified structure of what we continue to call "traditional experience" (238). Modernity, deeply intertwined with imperialism, consumerism, and fascism, as Paul Gilroy has so lucidly shown in *Against Race*, is seen to produce the basic twentieth-century experience, such as catastrophic events and global cross-cultural twentieth-century trauma conflict. Among art forms, cinema is singled out by scholars such as Tom Gunning, Wolfgang Schivelbush, and Lynne Kirby as involving a special relationship to trauma in the "shock" experience of modernity, especially as cinema disoriented traditional, primarily literary cultures.

Recollection of recent catastrophes brings us back into the trauma of industrialised warfare, totalitarian atrocities, and the extreme speed of modernization which, along with imperial invasions and colonial subjugation, demolished traditional cultures. Furthermore, traumas on post colonialism, immigration, and diaspora, as well as the world wars, have an impact on women, children, and families. In each case, the collective memory is articulated as a traumatic relationship with the past in which the group identifies itself as a victim through its recognition of a shared experience of violence. Therefore, by applying the same psychological classification to the person who suffers violence, the person who commits it

and the person who witnesses it, we can see that trauma profoundly transforms the moral framework of what constitutes humanity.

There is no difference between the survivor of genocide and the survivor of rape (war and rape in *Blasted*). Trauma in this reading is not simply the testimony of unbearable experiences, but also in itself a testimony to what has happened to the human being. However, it is a testimony that also bears witness to the persistence of humanity even in those extreme situations which threaten to dehumanize victims. Even where inhumanity has reached its most tragic expression, as in the Nazi death camps, this approach suggests that some element of humanity inexorably resists dehumanization- and it is this product of an experience of inhumanity which is proof of the humanity of those who have endured it.

Trauma has a status more as a moral than psychological. Rather than being a clinical reality, trauma today is a moral judgment. This is what Kane employs: It is a moral judgement, and inquiry into the condition of victimhood. The reality of the experience of descendants of survivors of the Holocaust, of the Armenian or Rwandan genocides, of victims of slavery or apartheid, is not a subject of clinical classification but rather of a judgement, the judgement of history. In other words, trauma today is more a feature of the moral landscape which serves to identify and legitimate victims.

In this sense, Kane's plays are a consolation for the victims and offer a form of compensation and reparation. At the same time, these plays establish a link between compassion and solidarity, and by allowing suffering to be transformed into action, action on stage, her language of trauma and solace plays an essential role in building the moral community of victims. In general, concern for victims is not simply a "fashion," it is rather the sign of a society that places the issue of suffering at the heart of its common concerns and offers a consolation and reparation.

Lastly, trauma defines the empirical way in which contemporary societies problematize the meaning of their moral responsibility in relation to external distress. The notion of trauma has become a general means of expressing the suffering of contemporary society, whether the events it derives from are individual (rape, torture, illness) or collective (genocide, war, disaster) as shown in Kane's work.

It was the mark of trauma that revealed the extraordinary tenacity of humanity among the survivors of the Holocaust; and it was the pain of trauma, inscribed in the collective memory, which would prevent a repetition of these horrors. The persistence of the psychic scar is a guarantee that the memory of the intolerable will never be erased.

Summing up, in Didier Fassin and Richard Rechtman's words, "we could define trauma as the sudden emergence of memory at the moment of danger" (16).

## **7.1 Phenomena and Structures of Trauma: Nineteenth, Early and Late Twentieth Century Thinkers**

Naturally, this all begins with Freud. At least, along with Freud's contemporaries and the pioneering clinicians who preceded him, nineteenth-and early twentieth-century thinkers had discovered the basic features and structures of trauma. It took the more sophisticated scientific technologies of the late twentieth century and mechanics, sometimes, at a cost due to Freud's insistence on unconscious fantasy as also involved in traumatic states.

What is interesting, is that unlike psychologists and others writing today, Freud and his peers did not set out to write a theory of trauma. The concept of trauma emerges in their work on hysteria as if it were already assumed. It is used to explain processes in hysteria, rather than as a concept that has itself to be theorized. French clinicians, mainly J. M. Charcot and his student Pierre Janet, pioneered research into hysteria and hypnosis. Charcot and Janet inspired Freud and Breuer, who noted that the symptoms of hysteria are the result of trauma. They noted that after an accident, memory of the danger and repetition of the fright "becomes associated with the memory of what happened afterwards—rescued and the consciousness of present safety."<sup>59</sup> Freud and Breuer implicitly gendered trauma in accordance with the way the bourgeois family in Europe was organized in these days. Thus, males largely suffer trauma as a result of accidents, women from extreme sexual repression.

Trauma was at first closely linked to the sexual experiences of young women. However, Freud soon questioned the degree to which the trauma depended on actual sexual abuse and theorized that fantasies of forbidden sexual desires could produce the same symptoms.<sup>60</sup> He moved on to develop other aspects of his psychoanalytic theories, and when he returned to trauma, it was now in relation to the symptoms for soldiers in World War I. As a result, Freud's ideas of trauma gradually grew in complexity and precision. He anticipated new technologies and modern neuroscience precision. Trauma was born in the late nineteenth century as a psychological category constructed on analogy to the medical notion of a

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<sup>59</sup> Freud, Sigmund and Josef Breuer (1893). *Collected Papers*, vol.1. London: The Hogarth Press, 1949, pp. 1-24.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid

corporeal injury, and it bears traces of this lineage even today, for one can speak as readily of a psychic scar as of a physical scar based purely on symptomatology. However, the focus of judgment on their perpetrators was ostensibly eliminated. Neither was the perpetrator distinguished from the victim.

## **7.2 Kane's Work: a Passionate, almost Pathological Identification with Pain and Trauma**

Before examining this section more closely, it is useful to rehearse once more some facts about Kane's life and work. In 1992 she attended Edgar's MA in playwriting at the University of Birmingham, where again she was a controversial student, notably picking a fight with director and playwright Terry Johnson during a weekend examining the director Max Stafford-Clark's methodology -both apogees of the theatre establishment she would continue to chafe against. Her degree showed unveiled Act I of *Blasted*<sup>61</sup>; which arrived after a rehearsal process of unprecedented tension, with mutinous talk among the undergraduate performers concerning the racist jokes and extreme sexuality. Its debut was witnessed by the agent Kenyon, whose strong links with the Royal Court were to prove pivotal for the play's professional exposure 18 months later. After graduation, Kane entered the new scene in London like a heat-seeking missile; as a reader, she proved a key figure at the Bush theatre under director Dromgoole. Then, on a cold January night in 1995, *Blasted* opened. The opening of *Blasted* on 17 January 1995 in the Theatre Upstairs at the Royal Court has achieved a secure place in theatre mythology. It is tragically mirrored by a corresponding mythical moment, the suicide of the author of the play, aged 28, in February 1999. These events and what lies between them continue to bear a traumatic force. The central concern in Kane's work is a passionate, almost pathological identification with pain and trauma.

In her plays, Kane gives testimony to what has happened to the human who is threatened to be dehumanized. Her plays embody images of the most unacceptable suffering, and symbolize at best a radical fringe of what is human in order to ensure a highly hypothetical "never again." Furthermore, her plays have at most functioned as catalysts

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<sup>61</sup> Mr David Edgar, the playwright and founder of the MA at Birmingham University, told me in November 2008, Thursday 20th in an interview at his house in Birmingham, that Kane represented parts of *Blasted* in his living room at parties on Saturdays that he and his wife offered to students.

within a process of profound social change that has recast the role of the trauma survivors who have become witnesses to the horrors of our age.

In less than twenty years, the notion of psychological trauma has imposed itself on society in such a way as to become the central reality of violence. My intention is to understand this phenomenon far from moralizing Kane's plays. I know my research touches on psychiatry and legal aspects,<sup>62</sup> because the topics which appear here need to be well defined and ruled as in case of rape and victims. However, as Kane was an artist and what she left us was a work of art, from my knowledge of philology, as a philologist and writer (in progress), I have also focused on the literary aspect. As a result, without forgetting psychiatric and legal aspects, the effects of trauma are going to be shown in Kane's plays. Before going on, the following question has to be addressed:

- Who are these traumatized people in Kane's plays?-

By blurring the boundary between visible and invisible injuries, trauma becomes the mark of all victims:

- The injured

- The survivors

The injured and the survivors, the victims and the perpetrators are those who are traumatized in Kane's plays.

The old concepts of "*traumatic neurosis*", "*traumatic stress*" claimed for Freudian purity have been the vehicle for the coinage of the term "psychic trauma" and the full recognition of victims (Fassin, and Rechtman, 16). Kane's plays are a memory of the trauma that identifies victims and perpetrators or, in other words, these plays are the authenticity of traumatic memory. Kane's plays are a true spectrum for victims and perpetrators of sexual violence and violence of war.<sup>63</sup> Consequently, all sexual abuse and the language of trauma, with its poetry included is what we are going to find in all her plays.

The reality of trauma is a fact that looks for reparation, consolation and solace. However, these are not seen as consolatory charity by Kane. These are seen as a just demand for compensation, obviously not in terms of financial reparation here, although the view to reparation is now recognized in the collective consciousness and in law, the passage here is the exhibition of the devastation of life in everyday life.

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<sup>62</sup> (Without development, as it is not the topic of my research).

<sup>63</sup> (As in the case of the Soldier in *Blasted* )

Indeed, Trauma has far exceeded the grasp of psychiatrists and their debates about how to define it. It is now a part of our everyday language. It has descriptive value, but more important than that prescriptive value is a calling for action (clinical, economic and symbolic) and reparation. Consequently, this research attempts to achieve a symbolic action in favour of sexual victims, and any victim in general. As the victims are often unable to talk about the horrors that have suffered, Kane offers in *Blasted* a right to reparation in Cate's trauma, in the name of Hippolytus in *Phaedra's love*, (...) and in the name of herself. The very silence of the victims has become evidence against the abusers who believed themselves protected by that silence.

Trauma and memory are which constitute the body of Kane's plays. Thanks to American feminists sexual abuse was unmasked. They expected doctors to testify in the name of all abused women, to speak for women who remained imprisoned in the silence of trauma, but they did not, and still they do not. Nor does what Cate endures constitutes legally admissible proof. We discover her trauma and the evidence of her sexual abuse only thanks to a play. The inclusion of perpetrators and their atrocities is not only merely an allusion of psychological trauma, it is above all proof and unbearable experience. Kane's gesture has a broader and more lasting significance. What she does is to make trauma the universal language of a new politics of the intolerable. Thus, what we see is a cooperation between victims and perpetrators in order to give testimony of "trauma."

There is a vestige of humanity in the perpetrators of the atrocities which is manifested through their trauma. Their need for destruction or suffering - even if they expressed no remorse - shows they still form part of the humanity that their cruelty would have destroyed. These perpetrators need to be cared for rather than judged and perhaps even condemned (Cate does it with Ian, the voices in *4.48 Psychosis*...). Thus, trauma includes them in the same category on violence.

In general, Kane's plays register the special viscosity of trauma in its depiction of rape in all the plays, as well as in the *Unpublished Monologues*. As the spectators witness trauma in Kane's plays, they also witness the sense of trauma in the mode of Shakespeare's tragedies or in the mode of playwrights as diverse as Beckett, Garcia Lorca, Eugene O'Neill and Tennessee Williams.

Marguerite Duras, writer, filmmaker, and activist, says at the beginning of *La Doleur* (literally "The Sorrow," but translated in the 1986 English version as *The War*):



*The War* is one of the most important things in my life. It cannot really be called "writing"... I found myself confronted with a tremendous chaos of thought and feelings that I couldn't bring myself to tamper with, and beside which literature was something of which I felt ashamed. (4)<sup>64</sup>

First, there is the obvious amnesia—something quite common in trauma. This amnesia seems to be more about writing than the events themselves, in Duras' case. The writing style<sup>65</sup> itself amply communicates the panic state Duras endured for weeks on end. She anticipates debates about trauma, about dissociation, and about the vexed question of "literature" dealing with trauma, especially in relation to the Holocaust. Kane in *Cleansed* shows violence and horror in concentration camps (as she compared university to a concentration camp) and more about trauma and panic attacks.

Pain needs room, says Duras (7), thus in Kane's *Cleansed* the scenes are divided in rooms- scene three is *The White Room- the university sanatorium*, scene six is *The Black Room*, *The Round Room* is the library. Duras and Kane have "the malady of grief" in common due to different life experiences. While Duras seems a paradigm of a traumatized person, seeking her own distance from trauma, Kane is rooted into trauma, and her writing is united to the trauma without any disconnection from her present lived moment. However, both share a commitment to justice and human rights, shown on different levels.

Trauma marks Kane's (and Duras') texts in the moments showing paralysis in endless repetition, the unleaded circularity, all aspects of the nonrepresentability of trauma and yet of the search to figure its pain. An example in *4.48 Psychosis* among many in Kane's plays:

- Did it give you relief?

-No

- Did it relieve the tension?

-No.

- Did it give you relief?

-No

(*Silence*) Did it give you relief?

-No.

(216)

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<sup>64</sup> (I have quoted this passage at length because there is much to discuss).

<sup>65</sup> (In the case of Kane, I have only seen her texts at university in typing machine as the use of the computer at university is recent. Her brother Simon, who does not allow to see her diaries or notebooks, until now, or at least to some people, keeps them.)

Fragments, hallucinations, and flashbacks as examples of trauma are actually present in Kane:

Come now, let us reason together  
Sanity is found in the mountain of the Lord's house on the  
horizon of the soul that eternally recedes  
The head is sick, the heart's caul torn  
Thread the ground on which wisdom walks  
Embrace beautiful lies –  
The chronic insanity of the sane (4.48 *Psychosis*, 229)

I will drown in dysphoria  
in the cold black pond of my self  
the pit of my immaterial mind. (4.48 *Psychosis*, 213)

I wish to comment briefly on two aspects of Kane's texts which indicate trauma beneath a smooth surface. Firstly, the memories are not always in chronological order: they are fragments, pieces, that weave back and forth between different phases of Kane's childhood (supposedly) and they have surely been worked on by unconscious fantasies in intervening years. There is not much linear progression in the last two plays. Secondly, the more one reads or listens to her texts, the more sharply the emotional intensity emerges. While many memories are recalled without explicit reference to emotion, the events that were especially traumatic, accompanied by emotional signifiers, stand out all the more. The following texts (already shown before) from the *Comic Monologue* testify to it:

I was going out with this man. His name is Kevin.  
I could see what he thought. That now he'd have me. That my resistance had to stop.  
I stood up. This had gone too far. I said, 'I'm going home'

He reached out and grabbed my arm. "You're fucking not." He swung me round backwards and tripped me. I was lashing out, but he trod on my hands and sat on me. Legs astride my head. He wasn't much bigger than me but I couldn't get free. I stopped struggling and looked in his eyes reasonably. I said, "Kevin, please stop this"

He smiled and said 'Suck it.'

I stared at him. I knew that in a minute he was going to force

me. Get my mouth open and make me.

At the same moment we burst into life. He was pushing his penis into my face, erect to the belly button, I was keeping my mouth firmly shut, kicking, wriggling, pushing with every muscle, with the strength I never knew I had, and I was terrified.

(first page,).

though I knew the morning brought defeat.

(...)

He came in my mouth. Oral rape. A taste usually bound up with loving emotion was now repulsive, abhorrent.

The tip of his penis was touching the back of my throat. I was Sick. He took of my throat. I was sick. He took his penis out and slapped me round the head several times, hard.

(second page)

I could taste sperm and vomit, and my hands were crashing onto the top of my head. I was sick again. He threw me down in disgust, like he was throwing away an old cloth. "Dyke". He spat. In my face.

(third page)

I cleaned my teeth with six different toothbrushes, then threw them all away. I made myself sick in case some of his sperm was in my stomach. I didn't eat properly for over a year. Swallowing food was like swallowing him.

I never went to the police. Kevin raped me orally. They'd raped me mentally.

(...) when I couldn't resist any more, I consented to my violation

Sometimes, when I'm making love, I start to cry. Because what I'm offering isn't good enough. I'm soiled goods. I'm not worth

the bother.

When you hear about a woman who's been raped "recovering in hospital," don't believe it. There is no recovery.

And when you hear a judge say that rape is not great trauma.<sup>66</sup>

Don't believe it. It's a lie. It's a trauma from which there is no recovery. There is no getting over it. ( fourth page)

Thus, we can see how Kane is almost standing outside of her trauma, or other people's trauma, writing "close to the bone" with a clarity and a resignation that may come as one anticipates death.

There is a cultural trauma (the collective or cultural trauma is a difficult one) but in Kane, we only attend to individual trauma which is linked to the social sphere, given that social conditions shape the impact of trauma. However, history seems to provide examples of national "forgetting" or displacement in the memory of cultural trauma. For example, suffering in World War II, especially the Holocaust, or the massacre of Native Americans in the United States, appear as if the entire nation has forgotten, or more precisely, it seems that the perpetrators have forgotten. Yet, groups that have been victimized in a nation do not forget, at least not in the same way as do the perpetrators, because historical trauma is specific, and not everybody is subject to it or entitled to a subject position associated with it. Consequently, in Kane, the individual trauma offers the tissues of mind and body extended to the social tissue, and that is why her superpersonalized plays achieve a universal resonance.

Perpetrators forget by means of controlling a "justified" argument which allows them no remorse. Whereas victims do not forget, and it is thanks to memory, that victims themselves, as a social group, have an influence on the society at large. Thus, the matrix of painful memory gives the victim the right to complain, to protest and make demands. In this sense, Kane's plays can be seen as a culture of victimhood, where trauma and its emotional suffering emerge on the stage.

Therefore, Kane's characters: Cate in *Blasted*, Hyppolitus in *Phaedra's Love*, the characters in *Cleansed* even Tinker, M and C in *Crave*, and the voices in *4.48 Psychosis*, are victims suffering from trauma and they do not forget. While their perpetrators easily forget and their amnesia allows them to be transformed or disappear: Ian is transformed but the Soldier disappears by committing suicide (although the soldier is victim of war trauma from

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<sup>66</sup> The underlined is mine.

Yugoslavia). The priest, in *Phaedra's Love*, after raping Hippolytus disappears by forgetting. A in *Crave* is also transformed and the perpetrator voices in *4.48 Psychosis* disappear as the play is ending. However, trauma is not restricted to the victim; it also burdens those who have committed the atrocities. Thus, the broad application of the concept of trauma makes it possible today to both recognize and go beyond the status of a victim. Besides, in Kane's plays, it has been applied the same psychological classification to the person who suffers violence, the person who commits it, and the person who witnesses so all these aspects are present in her work.

Analysing Kane's drama in terms of trauma, the early plays are characterised by administrating of "heavy doses" of "brutalising shock" to the audience. The term trauma generally designates a psychological and, above all, an entirely subjective response to an experience or event. The event may be an emotional experience, which cannot be processed, or it may be a time when the subject has felt radically threatened – a threat to life, bodily integrity, or sanity. This sense of being physically, cognitively or emotionally, overwhelmed seems to be a salient feature of Kane's dramaturgy, not only of the plays, but also in the relation to audience. The effect is perceived as a physical assault.

In *Blasted* the staging of trauma takes place in several main ways: through the abandonment of realism, through the performance of identity, through metaphors and images of sight and through the role of the body as site of trauma:

**Cate** Everyone in town is crying (51)

**Cate** What's happened to your eyes? (52)

The idea of collapse, in particular, facilitates a reading of the structure of the play as a psychotic episode in an alternate reality where meaning is organised according to the apparent illogicalities of the unconscious:

### **Scene Three**

*The hotel has been blasted by a mortar bomb*

*There is a large hole in one of the walls, and everything is covered in dust which is still falling.*

...

*Ian lies very still, eyes open.*

As Kane admits, in earlier drafts of the play the Soldier was Ian's hallucination, in the final version he becomes real, but anonymous. The traumatic nature of the play's story is communicated in a fragmentary, illogical and non-linear manner. The play is about manipulation, violation and war and simultaneously deals with an interior terrain, which is structured by the logic of dream and association.

In Kane's plays, we attend to the process of legitimizing suffering, in all of them, without exception. As in Beckett, Kane represents physical trauma as the cultural condition. Her characters and voices create a looping effect, it is said, an impact on the audience. In other words the conceptualization of a past event, in a theatrical performance, as a painful scar: the trauma of the experience, which is both perceptible to the general public and clinically identifiable (Kane suffered bipolar disorder from her early teens, but this is not necessarily present as a subject in her plays). Consequently, this looping effect transforms our vision of humanity, or should in terms of social healing, but how can an author with only five plays alter our way of interacting with the world?. These are the questions I have wanted to explore to ensure the highly hypothetical "never again" symbolizing at best a radical fringe of what is human, and this is what Kane's plays trace.

While we (those who hope) wait for a process of profound social change in the traumatised experience, this thesis humbly pretends to bring comfort and relief to suffering individuals abandoned to their fate, as Kane herself wished in her moments of lucidity, which, of course, were many. Therefore, by recognizing trauma in her plays we can contribute to victims in a culturally and politically respectable way so as they do not feel so abandoned to their fate.

In conclusion, trauma can be viewed as the locus of an essential truth about humanity that stands apart from the moral qualities of the victim. In this sense, perpetrators and victims can be classed together and we can talk about the self-traumatized perpetrator. Thus in both, victim and perpetrator, horror and terror mount in a slow flood and are drown in suffering: this is what Kane does with her victims and perpetrators.

### 7.3 From Terror to Trauma in Kane's *Blasted* and *Cleansed*

To link the writing of a play with an act of terrorism is tendentious to say the least. The shock of *Blasted* and the impact of terrorism have more in common than it might at first be assumed. Firstly, one should consider the perpetrators themselves, it is a cliché of counter-terrorism that the violence of the terrorist act arises from social isolation. Certainly, terrorists often hail from inassimilable minority groups who despair of the vehicles of protest or change available in the mainstream and stand at odds with, or against the majority – terrorists are always to this extent "avant-gardist"; and the extremity of Kane's writing speaks of the gulf between her and both her notional audience and the theatre establishment of the day. Her work was not destined for the West End, but it also sat uneasily within the official fringes of the metropolitan scene; for all its latter-day infamy *Blasted* played for three weeks in a 60-seater theatre in its first incarnation, its audience barely exceeding 1,000 viewers. Equally, *Cleansed* in 1998, her first main-stage show, made little impact on the vast auditorium of the Duke of York's Theatre. Conventional politics aim to reach and persuade majorities and theatre audiences, but in their disregard for conventional audience pleasure or approbation, Kane's plays mirror terrorism's disdain for rhetoric and the numbers game. Her plays seek not to persuade but to present.

One way to understanding the terror aesthetic is to see it as a repudiation of humanism. Humanist politics is embodied only in the credo of pluralism; in aesthetic terms it is best expressed in a resonant line from Jean Renoir's great film *La Règle du Jeu* (1930), "everyone has their reasons." In theatrical terms humanism gently proposes that these reasons might be articulated within the play – indeed that a play is a place to air and voice reasons in order to reveal the characters as complex, yet reasonable beings, driven by motives that can be understood. Humanism, evidently, has its blind spots: it does not interrogate violence with sophistication. In fact, humanist theatre or indeed social realist theatre only represents violence through a desire to rationalize it as something soluble and comprehensible. Terrorism dispenses with humanism from the outset. Terrorism asserts that it is too late for reasons, too late for debate.

This displacement of humanism helps explain the source of the cold power of *Blasted* and *Cleansed*; in these two plays Kane offers a world without explanations, both within the text at the level of motive and through generic precedent – settings, for instance, which mutate into their opposite, and that must simply be accepted as a challenge to the rules of

theatrical engagement. Actions and relationships lack prehistories or refuse to elucidate them. Gestures generate incomprehensible responses. The brutal exchanges between Ian and Cate have a flat, uninflected logic to them; they reveal little behind themselves and the emotion they inspire verges on numbness:

**Ian:** Why did you come here?  
**Cate:** You sounded unhappy.  
**Ian:** Make me happy.  
**Cate:** I can't.  
**Ian:** Please.  
**Cate:** No.  
**Ian:** Why not?  
**Cate:** Can't.  
**Ian:** Can.  
**Cate:** How?  
**Ian:** You know.  
**Cate:** Don't. ( *Blasted*, 23)

The actor of course can supply subtext; yet this tone marks the beginning of a refusal of dialogic norms that Kane would take further in *Cleansed*. Language is subjected to a reduction, the dialogue refuses to advance the story, circling back on itself, refusing to elucidate. Movement and revelation, so central to humanist dramaturgy, are disavowed. Therefore, when the Soldier arrives in Act II his itemization of the cruelties he has engaged in does not serve as such to make sense of his rape and mutilation of Ian, but is merely present for its inexorable logic:

It's nothing. Saw thousands of people packed into trucks like pigs trying to leave town. Women threw their babies on board hoping someone would look after them. Crushing each other to death. Insides of people's heads came out their eyes. Saw a child most of his face blown off, young girl I fucked hand up inside her trying to claw my liquid out, starving man eating his wife's leg. Gun was born here and can't die. Can't get tragic about your arse. (*Blasted*, 50)

Violence has permeated the world with numbness, with a failure of evaluative language notably, as with Kane's tendency to offer subjectless titles, the dialogue is often devoid of personal pronouns. Actions are separated from subjects and nothing seems personal. Even when the Soldier is on the brink of raping Ian, Kane gives the Soldier a line



of devastating affectlessness: "Can't get tragic about your arse." Indeed the Soldier's partiality of a synecdoche (Ian as "arse," violence as "gun") is an endemic tendency in a world where parts have thoroughly displaced the reality of wholes.

A brief glance at the text of *Blasted*, does not of course, reveals a single reference to Bosnia. Ostermeier's production at the Schaubühne and in London (Barbican, 2006 November) banished the disputed ghost of Bosnia for a more alarming contemporary scenario: Fallujah in Iraq. Yet both his approach and observations reveal that much the power of *Blasted* and later *Cleansed* (1998) derive from their tendency to enact a kind of aesthetic terror on the audience. There are of course many precedents for such assaults both in art and in life. During the Vietnam war Situationists in Paris sprung corpses of South East Asian origin from morgues, covered them in theatrical gore and floated them down the Seine. Their desire to fuse art and life in outrage claimed ancestry from the Surrealists: indeed André Breton, the self-proclaimed theorist of Surrealism, asserted in his manifesto that the primary Surrealist act consisted of going into the street with revolvers in your fists and shooting blindly into the crowd.<sup>67</sup>

More controversially, the German composer Karl Heinz Stockhausen characterized the crashing of two passenger jets into the iconic Twin Towers on September 11, 2001, as "the greatest work of art ever." In the furore that followed this comment, few remarked on the fact that this action itself was indeed dubbed by Al-Qaeda as a "spectacular." What these actions or works share with terrorism proper is their desire to confound expectation by means of short-circuiting expectation. Whatever the deeper didactic intent, artistic terror and actual terror seek to jolt the world from its habitual mode, and usher in a state of perpetual uncertainty. They seek to undermine everyday life and its "taken for granted" complacencies; and whilst terrorism might have commenced as the military action of the weak, it has mutated into something much more inexplicable. It is startling to think that Kane did not live to see the events of 9/11 and the ensuing open-ended "War on Terror." Indeed, at the end of Kane's all too short life, terrorism in its more conventionally understood form, by non-state agents, seemed to be on the wane (witness the peace process in Northern Ireland and the Oslo accords still in effect in Israel/Palestine). The dominant mode of violence in 1990s was in fact inter-ethnic war – conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, inter-ethnic conflicts in the former

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<sup>67</sup> See André Breton (1930) "Second Manifesto for Surrealism" in Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane (eds).(1969). *Manifestoes of Surrealism*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, pp. 117-94.

Soviet Union, the first invasion of Chechnya and the horror of the Rwandan genocide. Violence, for the West at least, was elsewhere, done to others by others.

Dialogue in the first half of *Blasted* is barely allowed to transcend the monosyllable; there is little pleasure to be derived from the wearying reflex of the obscenity, the racist jokes, the ceaseless rehearsals of spoken abuse – as in her model play, Bond's *Saved*, the dialogue takes the form of a maze. In the second half of the play, language loses even the spine of give and take, whittled down to gruelling litanies of violence, then finally reduced to grunts and animalistic outbursts. For all the tragic potential and imaginistic echoes, for Ian there is only "terror on horror's head accumulating." Few dramatists have dared to enact the banality of evil quite so thoroughly.

The wheeling out of uncomprehending critical jeremiads, such as Jack Tinker's of the play a "feast of filth," is a positive proof of Kane's success, and reveals that the play has an inner didactic, which resides precisely in its refusal to tell and its compulsion to show. It is notable that the play has rarely been revived on the British stage, for it bears within it a resistance to theatre itself. The title, with its often-remarked clenched echo of Bond's *Saved*, is intentionally vague in reference – who is blasted? Is it a shared state for the characters? Is it an intention in relation to form itself, which meticulously pursues naturalism to its limit only to discard it for fragments of lyrical horror? The play relies on the tragic impulse to create truth out of pain but then seeks only to show the effects of pain, as if they spoke just as eloquently. There is a curious optimism in this idea that unvoiced staged suffering and violence are expressive rather than simply a refusal of expression (violence is a silence, after all) – the same optimism that perhaps motivates terrorists to see random acts of destruction, unvoiced and unowned, as a form of communication.

If *Blasted*'s world of violence draws its meaning and plausibility from the systematized outrages of war, the violence is presented as a code without a key. In *Cleansed* the institution Grace enters is described as a university with cricket grounds and medical rooms, but it functions like a site for animal experimentation such as the Huntingdon Life Science (Kane herself was a vegan and opposed to vivisection). It is a death camp but also, in a contemporary twist, a rape camp, as in Omarska in the former Yugoslavia conflict. The play's title certainly echoes a key phrase of that war – "ethnic cleansing." However, the setting is also a house of correction, a prison and an asylum, comparable to those analysed in Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*. The deliberate confusion of functions and spaces is critical to Kane's theatrical terrorism – by fusing the familiar with the unfamiliar, she

reproduces the shock of the extempore use of social spaces such as the deployment of gyms in Bosnia as torture chambers. Again Kane's bleak vision dresses up the entire process of being social as a constant deformation and mutilation of the self, which even the perpetrators, do not transcend – witness Tinker, who like Ian, reveals male sexuality as chiefly masturbatory and voyeuristic. The ambiguous past participle that hangs over the play is expressive again of a profound challenge to judgement and categorization.

If terror speaks to all, then its message is devastatingly simple; it seeks to reveal the vulnerability of those far from combat zones who deem themselves immune to violence. It is no coincidence that it emerges at precisely the point when developed nations live in unprecedented prosperity and security, far from what the philosopher Ted Honderich has called "a world of bad lives" (Honderich, 1-29). This notion was perceptively highlighted in one of the keenest defences of *Blasted*, a letter to the *Guardian* from her fellow playwrights Martin Crimp, Paul Godfrey, Meredith Oakes and Gregory Motton: "the power of Mrs. Kane's play lies precisely in the fact that she dares to range beyond personal experience and brings the wars that rage at such a convenient distance from this island right into its heart" (*Guardian* 23 January 1995). In this light one has to assess Kane's grafting of atrocity onto the bland, normalized violence of the world of Ian and Cate, and epitomized by Ian's lazy recitation of a murder over the phone to his editor before he rapes Cate. The sublimely arrogant image of the New World Order proclaimed by the American diplomat Francis Fukuyama as the "end of history" was horribly belied by the inter-ethnic slaughters of the 1990's; yet whether in Rwanda or Bosnia the gawping voyeurs of the West could look on and dub these eruptions of face-to-face violence atavism. Kane's project was to map one world onto another, to bring the violence home. Her major plays are profoundly preoccupied with the representation of violence, which has become an ubiquitous commodity in mainstream culture. Ian's "story," for instance, is hilariously estranged by the mechanisms of dictated typographic realization and punctuation:

A serial killer slaughtered British tourist Samantha Scrace, S-C-R-A-C-E, in a sick murder ritual comma, police revealed yesterday point new par. The bubbly nineteen year old from Leeds was among seven victims found buried in identical triangular tombs... Each had been stabbed more than twenty times and placed face down comma, hands bound behind their backs point new par. (*Blasted*, 12)

Ian sees his tack of packaging violence ("Shootings and rapes and kids getting abused by queer priests and schoolteachers") into viable tabloid "stories" as quite separate from

responding to the horrors the Soldier tells him about, which he claims lack a "personal" dimension. Ian is, after all, a "home journalist" who does not cover "foreign affairs." To this extent, he speaks for a culture that refuses to read violence as part of social action, and which seeks to trivialize suffering through narrative convention and cliché. In the education of Ian, the play releases violence from limiting ideology and consoling frameworks: it makes it precisely gratuitous. The actions that occur are beyond description; they even seem to defy theatrical realization. They push representation to its extremes and transgress given forms in the process.

*Cleansed* reveals more of this equivocal and dangerous sensibility and starts to turn it into a code of sorts, however naïve and spasmodic. The play itself is a testimony of the experience of love. If critics and commentators struggled to place *Blasted* in a consensual context and finally offered it at best as a response to the shocking rage of inter-ethnic violence in former Yugoslavia, *Cleansed* could only be attributed to a more interior disorder, a more private pain. As this text is dedicated to fellow inpatients and staff at the ES3 clinic, an acute psychiatric inpatient admission ward at the Maudsley Hospital in London, that reading seems borne out. For again Kane effaced the inner clues to the play's functioning, an effacement rendered even more baffling in James MacDonald's epic and laborious first production, which seemed to progress with the unhurried tempo of a nightmare. *Cleansed* departed from the legible context of English playwriting and broke up into an assemblage images with a lineage in expressionism and performance art.

In *Cleansed* Kane develops a statement of violence, which is both deliberate and casual at the same time. Tinker's discourse is sometimes without malice; even as he despatches Graham he delivers a banal altruism: "Life is sweet" (108). What is even more disturbing in this play is Kane's removal of any resistance bar a kind of placid stoicism, summed up in the reiterated word, "lovely." This horror becomes routine and there is nothing to be done about it. At this point, we are back to the unrecoverable nature of violence, which Kane more than ever expresses in her work: despite all the comparisons with the Jacobians or the Greeks, its meaning resides precisely in its lack of meaning.

In *Cleansed*, there is no sign-system of violence to map the acts onto. Thus, the defining heresy against audiences and critics alike was the continued abandonment of narrative gratification in favour of fragments of action; the images are pegged on a slender fable: the accession of Grace to some mystical institution (presided over the mysterious

Tinker) to retrieve the remains of her brother Graham. Kane's own direction for Büchner's *Woyzeck* at the Gate Theatre the previous year seemed to grant her a structure – but where Büchner's scenes are accidentally foreshortened and oblique, the play was unfinished, Kane's version repudiates development and action. Indeed, Kane replaces action with violence, which in most narratives advances and catalyses action – that is, psychological and linguistic reactions – but here it merely forms a type of punctuation, expressive of states and processes beyond language. In turn, the dialogue is flat and enervated, which reduces characters to mere bodies and voices as in permanent trauma.

#### **7.4 Comparison of the Impact of *Blasted* with its Peer Texts**

Kane wanted to express a concomitant desire to communicate the horror of pain in its own idiom. To achieve this end she shaped a practice, which sought to shatter the racist social certainties of British theatre and the pieties of the new consensus known as political correctness; her plays resisted ideology at all levels in response to political conflicts enacted in the name of fixed identities and categories. *Blasted* proved to be the acme of this approach. In this way, Kane's affront to British theatre was to attack the shared codes of legibility and value that had enabled this consensual practice. In that sense, she was as much a symptom as the cause. The post-ideological dramatists of the 1990s, who shook themselves loose from the constraint of "grand narratives," and who were dubbed patronisingly by Benedict Nightingale "Mrs Thatcher's disorientated children" (Saunders 2002:6), found themselves incapable of affirming the socialist and feminist underpinnings of the British stage that had preceded them. In that sense Kane, their bravest and most radical voice, formally revealed the intimation of the politics that would occupy the ensuing vacuum – post-humanist, experiential, non-consensual. The chorus of stunned disapproval that marked Sarah Kane's entry into the annals of British theatre may have congealed into mythology, but the challenge presented by *Blasted* is not yet to be fully answered.

However, I consider that it is useful to compare the impact of *Blasted* with its peer texts. The paradigmatic account in Sierz's *In-Yer-Face Theatre* (2000) stakes out the terrain, if rather too inclusively. It is necessary to separate Kane from the company with which she has been grouped, the *enfants terribles* of the mid-1990's. The plays of David Eldridge, Joe Penhall, Simon Block, Marber and Butterworth, for instance, bear little resemblance to the ambitions and formal violations that Kane's work proposes. These dramatists, who collectively represent a movement not dissimilar to the wave of New British Artists or the

practitioners of Britpop, share a traditionalist outlook on theatre real form that marks a revisiting of the devices and effects of British theatre in its 1960's—social realism, albeit nuanced, heightened and transmuted through an affiliation to the dialogic stringencies of a Pinter or a Mamet, is the presiding aesthetic for such writers. It is hardly surprising that their socially accurate, eminently actable early plays, which largely centre on male experience and wholly repudiate any epic or political legacies, have yielded careers that move seamlessly from theatre to television and film. It is hard to imagine a similar trajectory for Kane had she been granted the time to "mature." Equally, whilst the defining voices above moved without difficulty between new-writing theatres (the Royal Court, the Bush, the Hampstead), their "authenticity" offered as an identity card, their audiences (so often mirroring the characters in their plays) might have felt refreshed by "new," "in-yer-face" counters, drug taking, sexual frankness and the poetics of obscenity, but they were rarely confronted at a fundamental, ethical and perceptual level. Indeed, these plays carried within them their ideal audience, using shock in turn with recognition; they sought to cultivate a new audience rather than exaltation audiences as such.

Even more alarming contemporaries such as Anthony Neilsen, Ravenhill or Philip Ridley worked much closer to the shore than Kane. Ravenhill's *Shopping and Fucking* (1996) depends upon genre and shared cultural references, which may make the play hermetic for some, but creates recognition at a deep level for others; pleasure, after all, is a defining programme for the "queer" theatre Ravenhill practises, even if that pleasure houses extremity and suffering within it. It is notable that much of Ravenhill's work, like that of, say, McDonagh's, is unabashedly comic in form, offering queasy closures and aphoristic dialogue in the Wildean tradition. It is hard to imagine *Blasted* gaining three successive revivals and a British Council subsidized world tour as Ravenhill's play did, an emissary for "Cool Britannia" despite its ostensible bleakness.

In retrospect, it seems that many of Kane's contemporaries are dramatists who are seeking to uphold or gently nuance the given consensus of the stage rather than challenge it. The rimming, baby-burning and anal evisceration that constitute the shock semiotics of Ravenhill's work are not interchangeable with the amputations, deocularizations and graftings that litter Kane's. In much so-called "in-yer-face" theatre, violence provides a site of ambiguous pleasure and narrative movement; it is part of the moral economy of the play. In fact, much of the impetus towards staging violence came from the contemporary film aesthetic epitomized by director Quentin Tarantino, who pronounced it to be an action

interchangeable with any other, generating no moral backwash, simply one sign amongst others.

The disturbing yet consumable drama of self-abuse in Mark Ravenhill, symbolized by Gary in *Shopping and Fucking* wishing upon himself a "hurt" that unifies desire and punishment in one hit, certainly troubles the audience – but the same masochism evidence in Grace's demands in *Cleansed* has a more enduring impact simply from its structural position, which is precisely aesthetic and anti-climatic. Kane's signs of violence are literally show-stopping in their ponderous heaviness and their unapologetic frequency. Linguistically too the "in-er-face" oeuvre is marked by its street/smart demotic, its unleashing of a highly self-conscious and intertextualized profane poetics of speech, which is largely connected to its staging of masculinity. Again, Tarantino, himself a perhaps unwitting apostle of David Mamet, stands as a model, his films marked by a baroque, language-heavy idiom, emotionally cauterized and wilfully ironic. The performance of the dialogue of Penhall or Ravenhill is an index of their theatricality; whilst much of the dialogue in these plays is spare, it is punctuated by self-inventing, bizarre extemporizations, such as Robbie's fantasy after the club sequence in *Shopping and Fucking*. The vigour of the story-telling and bravado of the reference-laden text overreach the limits of social realism and transcend the functions of narrative: these plays are marked by writers with "voices."

Concluding the comparison of the impact of *Blasted* against its peer texts it has to be stated that aesthetic terrorism was hardly their bag, although those works do sometimes contain violence.

## 7.5 Trauma on Stage in Kane

There's only the same danger of overdose in the theatre as there is in life. The choice is either to represent it, or not to represent it. I've chosen to represent it because sometimes we have to descend into hell imaginatively in order to avoid going there in reality.<sup>68</sup>

Kane's drama falls into two stages in which she explores the extreme in very different ways. Consequently, it is important to acknowledge that there is always a constant shift in her plays where it could not be avoided that, as individuals, we sustain trauma, mourn and

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<sup>68</sup> Sarah Kane, interview, *Rage and Reason: Women Playwrights on Playwriting*, eds. Heide Stephenson and Natasha Langridge (London: Methuen, 1997) pp. 132-3.

recover by constructing a narrative of loss and redemption. Thus, Kane's plays act out our traumatic residues and before providing solace, her work cauterizes the wound with uncomfortable questions and unflinching reflection by depicting trauma on stage.

*Blasted*, *Phaedra's Love* and *Cleansed* communicate traumatic encounters with alterity in a physical and often visually explicit manner, but in *Crave* and positive cases such as the embedded response to radical alterity (in death, violence, desire, and mental breakdown) trauma emerges in coded form - in displacements, fragments, condensations and repetitions.

The catalogue of brutal images and events from *Blasted*, *Phaedra's Love* and *Cleansed* are impossible to ignore, critically circumnavigate or omit. These are images of trauma chosen deliberately in concordance with Kane's declared aesthetic project<sup>69</sup> for an integrally violent spectacle. For example, in *Blasted*, the staging of traumatic alterity takes place in several principle ways: through the performance of identity, through metaphors and images of sight and through the role of the body as site of trauma.

### 7.5.1 *Blasted*

The idea of collapse and trauma, in particular, facilitates a reading of the structure of *Blasted* as a psychotic episode in an alternate reality where meaning is organised according to the apparent illogicalities of the unconscious. As Kane admits, in earlier drafts of the play, the soldier was Ian's hallucination, in the final version he becomes real, but anonymous.<sup>70</sup> Buse follows this possibility to some extent in an article entitled, "Sarah Kane In and On Media." He proposes that the given traumatic nature of the plot and that trauma is generally communicated in a fragmentary, illogical and non-linear manner, the second part of the play might also be interpreted as an alternate order of experience, perhaps a figment of Ian's imagination. While directors have tended to interpret the second half of the play metaphorically as a dream or nightmare, Kane suggests "by the end, we should be wondering if the first half was a dream."<sup>71</sup> Thus, while the play is "about" manipulation, violation and

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<sup>69</sup> See Kane's views on theatre from "The Only Thing I Remember is ...". *Guardian* 13 Aug. 1999, pp. 12:

"Theatre has no memory, which makes it the most existential of the arts. No doubt that is why I keep coming back, in the hope that someone in a dark room somewhere will show me an image that burns itself not in my mind, leaving a mark more permanent than the moment itself."

<sup>70</sup> Sierz, *In-Yer-Face Theatre*, 102. See Saunders, *Sarah Kane and the Theatre of Extremes*, 46-47 on the development of the character of the soldier.

<sup>71</sup> Sierz, *In-Yer-Face Theatre*, 106.



war, it simultaneously deals with an interior terrain, which is structured by the logic of dream and association.

Certainly a logic of Freudian dream-work of condensation and displacement, or in Lacanian terms metonymy and metaphor, is suggested by the mirroring effects and repetitions in the play. In the figure of the soldier, Ian encounters a character like himself, whose actions to some extent reflect, but also exaggerate, his own behaviour in the first part of the play. Ian's racism is mirrored in the soldier's engagement in brutal ethnic cleansing. Ian is forced to listen to tales of real atrocities and is mocked for his naivety:

**Soldier:** You never killed anyone.  
**Ian:** Fucking have.  
[...]  
**Soldier:** Couldn't talk like this. You'd know.  
**Ian:** Know what  
**Soldier:** Exactly. You don't know.  
**Ian:** Know fucking what? (46)

Ian's rape of Cate is juxtaposed with the soldier's description of raping and torturing enemy women and girls. Although Cate is in the first scene dependent and childlike, in the altered territory of the remaining scenes, she mothers a dying baby and then finally cares for Ian by feeding him. The logic of nightmare is not only articulated through the arbitrariness of transformation brought by the blast, where rationality and causality seem to break down and in the symmetry of the soldier's violation of Ian, but also in the way he is, literally, blinded by violence to which earlier he seems morally blind.<sup>72</sup> While Ian reports on the murder of a young British woman in New Zealand as a tabloid spectacle, he is unwilling to report and record the soldier's experience:

I do other stuff. Shooting and rapes and kids getting  
Fiddled by queer priests and schoolteachers. Not soldiers  
  
Screwing each other for a patch of land. It has to be...  
Personal. You're girlfriend, she's a story. Soft and clean.  
Not you [...]. Why bring you to light? (48)

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<sup>72</sup> Buse compares Ian's callous report on a murder with his later inability to tell or to bear witness to the soldier's horrific stories of war and relates this to Felman's notion of witnessing and trauma.

In the altered logic of the second half of the play, Ian recognises himself as the other, becoming a victim of his own prejudices and desires embodied in the extreme figure of the soldier whose experiences are, in effect, unspeakable for him.

Extending the dreamlike displacement still further, it is perhaps a form of perverse wish-fulfilment that Cate, initially a vulnerable, simple-minded victim, becomes a calculating survivor who prolongs Ian's suffering by thwarting his attempt to commit suicide. Cate's repetition of the phrase "You're a nightmare" (33, 51) though at first understood as a metaphoric displacement, seems, when repeated, to describe him literally. Innes also notes "the purely associative connections in the action, characteristic of the subconscious" (Innes, 531) the way in which the idea of an abandoned baby is introduced and soon afterward Cate returns with a baby, the connection between the starving baby and the starving Ian and how the grave Cate makes for the dead baby also serves for Ian who buries himself there.

Ian's identity is structured by an aggressive relation to others; an overstated masculinity and a desire for control exacerbated by his failing health and imminent physical demise. All these values are called into question by the soldier's appearance on stage. The soldier takes the gun without difficulty. Later Ian's homophobia is rendered meaningless when confronted with the soldier's experience of torture.

During Ian's traumatic encounter with the soldier, perspective is altered in a play of metaphorical light and darkness, which recalls Lacan's assertion that dreams are characterized by not seeing or not understanding (91). However, although the eye-gouging episode rises to a web of literary, symbolic and psychoanalytic connotations, more generally the play presents bodies as sites of trauma: as terminally ill, dysfunctional, abused or mutilated. Ian's fear of death is coupled with this abject self-destructive consumption of alcohol and nicotine. His body is already decaying as repeated references to his odour and frequent coughing suggest. The lung he has had removed is described as a stinging "lump of rotting pork" (11). At the play's beginning Ian is a body on the point of collapse, in scene two he collapses in agony but survives, and by the play's conclusion he has become an uncanny body – mutilated and dead. Cate's body too is dysfunctional, stuttering and subject to seizures under stress. Her hysterical laughter and crying during these fits give vent to anxiety felt but not inarticulated. Lastly, the soldier is most obviously reduced to the status of "just" a body – a mutilation and murder machine expert in physical torment.

### 7.5.2 *Phaedra's Love*

*Phaedra's Love*, though formally less complex than *Blasted* or *Cleansed*, works within the conventions of Classical tragedy, as we have previously seen. Kane's version of the Phaedra myth has two principle points of interest. First, as noted above, in the description of the play, Kane's decision to stage violent acts which in Greek and Roman theatre would traditionally have been reported rather than performed, results in a spectacle of traumatic viscosity. Secondly, Kane's rewriting of Hippolytus adds a new dimension to the mythic narrative of obsession and desire usually centred on Phaedra. As Kane intended to retain "the classical concerns of Greek theatre" – "love, hate, death, revenge, suicide"- notably all violent, the question of tragedy having a supposedly cathartic function inevitably arises.

Both these modifications to the formal and thematic elements of the Phaedra's myth seem to undo an Aristotelian description of tragedy as the performance of seriousness and magnificent deeds, with the intention of "arousing fear and pity" in order "to accomplish [...] catharsis of such emotions" (Aristotle, 230). The emotions stirred by the play are largely the result of the concluding spectacle. However, *Phaedra's Love* deliberately pursues visual excess to terrible and absurd lengths, with a view to trauma rather than a view of unhealthy or intense emotion.

### 7.5.3 *Cleansed*

Like *Blasted*, *Cleansed* is driven formally by the surreal logic of a traumatic dream. The adoption of expressionist strategies of representation, which determine characterisation and dramatic structure, however, is clearly more pronounced in *Cleansed*. In this play, love and madness explored by translating the figurative into the literal and making the body the site of trauma. The theme of self-loss is played out from different perspectives. The imbalance between the first couple, Rod and Carl, is clear from the beginning. While Carl's desire is for possession (to fix) even institutionalise, the relationship through the symbolic exchange of rings and vows, Rod will only make promises for the present: "I love you *now*. I'm with you *now*. I'll do my best, moment to moment, not to betray you. Now. That's it. No more. Don't make me lie to you" (111). In the surreal space of Tinker's "institution," Carl's absolute vow of loyalty is tested through grotesque physical torture and effectively deeds to his mutilation and Rod's self-sacrifice. Following his betrayal of Rod, Carl is forced to "eat

his words" by swallowing the rings and each time he attempts to express his love he loses the part of his body he has used.

Similarly, with the Grace-Graham couple, loss of self is mapped on the body. In a vivid play of negation, Graham the absent object of Grace's desire is rendered present through imitation and self-annihilation. Grace wishes her body "looked like it feels. Graham outside like Graham inside" (126). Grace "becomes one" with her brother-lover only by becoming other to her self, through the erasure of her identity, first by wearing his clothes, then by undergoing a lobotomy and rudimentary sex change. Ironically, Tinker's "saving" of Grace in fact is the destroying of her – her memory and her sex. The emotional pain of love is rendered physical, and though acts of physical torture in the play require stylisation (and indeed were heavily stylised in the original production), they retain their shocking effect.

Finally, *Cleansed* is a play with basically a positive message about love which must be balanced against the overarching sense that absolute truth is to be found only in trauma. This truth is reiterated with greater despair in *Crave* and *4.49 Psychosis*, both of which conclude in what seems to be, within the playwright's world view, a necessary and inexorable free fall into abnegation.

In each of the plays discussed, the spectacle of self-mutilation surfaces in Kane's work as a problematic metaphor for an experience of trauma that is extended in her last plays. Both *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis* turn upon the experiential of mental, rather than physical, anguish. These two plays sustain a public performance of private traumas.

The latent hysteria of each of the voices in *Crave* radically challenges efforts to establish scenes of primal trauma or disturbance. As Elisabeth Bronfen maintains:

Hysteric symptoms are over determined, excessive, exaggerated precisely because they weld together several syntactically unconnected, psychic moments. (Bronfen, 33)

In this sense, *Crave* might be seen to stage the hysterical split subject whose inherently theatrical symptoms are "not determined by a mysterious trauma, but by an inarticulable desire continuously displaced." (Verhaeghe, 15).

The figures A, B, C and M in *Crave* tell various and increasingly fragmented and inconsistent stories which are then denied or cast into doubt. In striking contrast to the earlier plays, traumatic or painful events are suggested (child abuse, rape, betrayal, broken

relationships) but are always approached tangentially and recede again amid the layers of voices. As reviewer Christine Evans observes:

The mode of speech alternates between reverie and dialogue, which is written as a rhythmic interplay on certain speech motifs rather than conventional dramatic interaction. There are suggested pathways of exchange but relationships are hinted at rather than developed: dialogue functions as collision, which spins the solitary balls back into their own orbits.<sup>73</sup>

The play opens with C's line "You're dead to me" (155). Throughout, C appears to be on the verge of a breakdown provoked by some traumatic event in her past. She claims, "I am here to remember. I need to [...] remember. I have this grief and I do not know why" (171). At various points, she presents herself as deserted lover (158), sexually abused child (158), rape victim (178), child who has witnessed domestic violence (179), a mother who has lost her children (178). This plethora of a possible trauma is accompanied by a similarly excessive list of symptoms (that effectually cancel each other), ranging from terror to death, a longing to die, self-disgust, anorexia, bulimia, extreme emotional neediness and anger. Although less overtly, the other voices are similarly marked by lack and desire. M claims to be "the kind of woman about whom people say. Who *was* that woman?" (165). She longs for love: "If love would come" (160, 166) is repeated twice – but by the end of the play seems to reject the prospect "Couldn't love you less" (194). B is the most flippant, the most confused, speaker as the line "okay, I was, okay, I was, okay okay. I was, okay, two people, right?" (163) suggests. B appears to be careless and faithless, rejecting M's advances and her wish to have a child (167, 171, 172) though by the play's conclusion the locus of power between M and B has shifted and finally B too admits to self disgust (173), asking to be raped (199) and later killed (200). A's status seems determined by his striking claim at the beginning of the play – "I'm not a rapist [...] I'm a paedophile" (156) – it is A who delivers the love (169-170) longest, most romantic, and vulnerable declaration of love. All four figures, as the play's title suggests, are shaped by unfulfilled cravings.

This sense of the inarticulate, impossible desire and craving are also of a feature of *4.48 Psychosis* which dispenses with fixed speakers entirely. Saunders notes the structural

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<sup>73</sup> Evans, Christine, "Surface Tension in New York Theatre," *Real Time Arts* 41 (2000) <<http://www.realtime.net/rt4/evams.html>>.

similarity the plays bears to Crimp's *Attempt on Her Life*, "bringing together a myriad of unidentified and unnumbered voices" (Saunders, 111). Kane claimed that she wished the play to approximate barriers in life, it is said,

...what happens to a person's mind when the barriers which distinguish between reality and different forms of imagination completely disappear, so that you no longer know the difference between your waking life and your dream life. And you no longer know where you stop, and where the world starts. (interview with Dan Rebellato qtd in Saunders, *Sarah Kane and the Theatre of Extremes*, 111-112).

This abject state, dramatised in her final work in a play of voices of despair, perhaps best expresses a form of radical variation where the subject effectively cannot distinguish between self and other. The text is an assemblage of possible doctor patient dialogues, diary monologues, strings of numbers, lists of medications and their effects, lists of verbs and questions. Like C in *Crave*, the voice bemoans the fact that s/he "love [s] a person who does not exist" (215). The convolutions of a desire to be loved and self-hatred concluded in projection: "I think that you think of me the way I'd have you think of me" (243). Such statements suggest an affinity with Lacan's description of love,

as a specular mirage (...) essentially deception. It is situated in the field established at the level of the pleasure reference, of that sole signifier necessary to introduce a perspective centred on the ideal point, capital I, placed somewhere in the Other, from which the Other sees me, in the form I like to be seen. (Lacan, 1998, 268)

Ironically "4.48 the happy hour when clarity visits" (*4.48 Psychosis*, 242) is the moment of self-annihilation, the vanishing point of the self, which the voice invites one to watch (244).

To sum up this section, it is important to point out if Kane's commitment is to the cathartic function of art, then the unifying characteristic of her drama is an engagement with radical difference and mainly an attempt to encode these experiences in "truthful" forms by staging trauma under a species of absolutist fatalism. However, the expansion of the concept of trauma seems to indicate a general approval of the attractive idea that something in the human being resists all forms of moral destruction, and this is what Kane shows. Therefore, with a piece of paper or a word in it there is a drama in Kane's plays. This piece of paper

proves the trauma. The truth of writing. The meaning of words. Allegation of abuse. The *sequelae* of trauma that establishes the authenticity of her plays in her own bipolar disorder:

A revolution	(4.48 <i>Psychosis</i> , 241)
Nothing	( " " 239)
To be accepted	( " " 234)

In the space of less than fifteen years, between the end of the 1980's and the beginning of the new century, activism succeeded in moving from the back burner to the forefront of media attention. At the front, where injustice still reigns, Kane appears with her plays and shows the arena of psychic trauma, which is beginning to find public acceptance:

To avoid pain	(4.48 <i>Psychosis</i> , 234)
(...) To be accepted	(Ibid)

## **V. PETITIO**





# 1. Explanations

This term is used according to the meaning of request,<sup>74</sup> following Aristotle's *petitio principia*.<sup>75</sup> The *petitio principii* is a circular reasoning, i.e., a repetition of the same words in the premises and the conclusion. The *petitio principle* used here is considered a fallacy in the sense that it is not that the inference itself is invalid (since any statement is indeed equivalent to itself and can be transformed into the other, hence a circular reasoning) but that the argument can be deceptive. The reason behind this *petitio* is based on the title of this thesis: Hidden *Quantum* of Solace where a premise must have a different source of reason, ground or evidence for its truth different from that of the conclusion. Therefore, the words "hidden quantum" represent a different reasoning of solace. As this thesis is an analysis of Kane's plays viewed from the antonyms of solace: namely distress, torment, torture, violence... etc, yet the meaning in itself of solace: comfort, consolation as conclusion. Thus, the premise "hidden quantum" has a different source of reasoning and evidence for this truth that in the conclusion. However, as the reasoning is circular, the conclusion can be transformed into the premise, giving us Solace of Hidden *Quantum*.

In conclusion, a hidden *quantum* of solace or solace of hidden quantum is asked here by means of the poetic words, which is the object of study in this chapter:

La vida cotidiana puede ser penosa, agotadora y mecánica, pero cuando para consolarnos de los desengaños nos refugiarnos en el otro extremo, el sueño, la esperanza piadosa o incluso la poesía, no superamos las dificultades, sino que no las ocultamos. (Todorov: 223)

In this sense, we find a hidden quantum of solace by means of poetry in Kane's plays. The following example among many in her plays:

M I crossed a river that runs in shadow, (*Crave*, 196)

## 1.1. *Petitio*

Although Kane lacked the faculties of her mind and soul to comfort her, she left her plays to comfort us. As a result, there is an amount of solace in her plays, an amount required

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<sup>74</sup> According to the Webster Dictionary a request (*n.*). The act of asking for anything desired; expression of desire or demand; solicitation; prayer, petition.

<sup>75</sup> <http://philosophy.lander.edu/logic/circular.html>

or desired to solve the amount of violence. An amount of comfort required to balance the amount of violence; to be of some comfort. Thus, the circular reasoning of the *petitio principii* is shown as a kind of fallacy, although, as we have seen, the premises and the conclusion are the same but the premises must have a difference source of reasoning, which grounds or evidences for its truth from that of the conclusion.

If the topic of violence has been analysed in the hidden amount of solace, this is because I would like to decipher the quality of inner life in the characters, which Kane created, and because the presence or absence of violence has become the standard by which a government and civilization are judged. Cruelty and insensitive tolerance of human suffering connect us directly to our barbarian ancestors. Philanthropy is displaced by violence, by the destructive emotion of envy and materialist visions of life. An act of violence is a symptom of a breakdown of social empathy on the part of the perpetrator and marks regression to an earlier moral state. Those who perpetrate atrocious offenses, the ruffians that draw the lines of life, with or without any sense of religion and morality are a vivid example of the perfect brutalization of society.

I suggest that Kane wished to implant in the heart of man something unknown, such as a quantum of solace to blur the line, the invisible line that sometimes establishes the amount of violence in its atrocious nature. At the same time, she helps us to distinguish between violent and non-violent offenses. Moreover, she helps us to mitigate violence by means of exciting a feeling of compassion for the sufferer and understanding for the offender. As a result, the animal inside us, the savage, can be made tractable and docile because Kane was too moral and reflective. She looked for an amelioration of humanity. With her discourse of violence, she tried and asked for a new way to read into society. This is according to my point of view the petition "*petitio principii*" shown in her plays.

Although the perpetrators have no memory and violence is going to be in our life *ad infinitum*, Kane tries to give us a piece of alarm. She does this to show how pure violence arrives to a limit where no more suffering is possible. As a consequence, the enigma of the *quantum* of solace is the solution for the nontruth. If I may put it bluntly; she left us a body of work where we can perceive brief hope in disillusionment, contradictory as it may seem. Thus, my research on Kane's plays is an attempt to pave the way for the development of an extensive system for indentifying sufferers, with the intention of increasing public awareness and obtaining a *quantum* of solace. This is the subject of the *petitio*.

### 1.1.1 Comments on *Petitio*

I am not analysing it under the pathological perspective but the literary piece. This section develops from the idea that there is something in humanity which resists all forms of moral destruction. It is in the name of this vestige of humanity that compensation is demanded for damage suffered why witnesses should testify against all forms of oppression. Moreover, it becomes clear that individuals themselves are not content to behave as passive victims, although the development of victimology is something on the margins of official psychiatry and outside of the purpose of this thesis. Even though it is something of a long shot, I would like to achieve a bond to mobilize this development. That said, my main purpose is, once the concept of trauma is accepted, after a sexual abuse or any abuse and other forms of violence, to reach a *quantum* of solace through literature, in this case through Kane's poetic universe on stage.

Kane's plays are proofs of victimology, with characters demanding of victims' rights,<sup>76</sup> a relatively new recognition. As no special measures have been put in place to help women and men who have suddenly found themselves defenceless in the face of violence, victims are still subject to suspicion that they might be responsible for their suffering or that they harboured a personal weakness that was fertile ground for their disorder. Their honesty is under suspicion, or more precisely, of the truthfulness of what they were saying and of their motivations.

Therefore, what I seek and demand (*petitio*) with this thesis is a call for collective reparation towards the topics she illustrates. I reject the language of pity, and I appeal to social justice. Every victim is an unjustly solitary one, ignored by the public. The intimate revelation of the suffering is much more than a plea for compassion, although to acquire compassion can be, in a moment of ignorance about the victim, a great achievement. The victim faces alone the painful consequences of the violent events from the scandal of the collective indifference. Universal and national solidarity must be begged for the victims.

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<sup>76</sup> For example, Hippolytus is a victim, he is blamed and he accepts this guilt, he suffers, his vital boredom is liberated by means of a mutilation of his body as if he were a Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus* (Shakespeare) where body is a metaphor of oppression. Hippolytus in Kane lacks discipline, he constantly masturbates, has affairs, and lacks classical virtues, but in his agony in his last moment of life, he sees liberation as in the classic tragedy, where death is always a redemption. According to Aristotle the principle aim of tragedy is to provoke catharsis. For example, the catharsis, which is visible with Hippolytus' death, leads to the solace of the main character. This tragedy of Kane offers us a glimpse of her considerable creativity to transform the classic myth into something present in XX century, at the end. An other example is Ian, who in the altered logic of the second half of the play, misrecognises himself as other, becoming a victim of his own prejudices and desires embodied in the extreme figure of the soldier whose experiences are, in effect, unspeakable for him.

Kane's work is mainly a public recognition of victim's rights, open to any victim, without discrimination available and easily accessible, neither inquisitorial nor restrictive. We, the audience, as listening ears of Kane's plays, and witnesses, have a dual mission:

1. To support victims.
2. To offer compensation for them.

Solace as a collective response determining compensation is the powerful tool for all victims under a common umbrella, even those who have not yet recognize themselves as such. There are consolation and solace from and out of a religious tradition, (Kane was deeply religious as teenager), and suffered bipolar disorder from her teen years. However, what is clear is that the scientific process did not heal her, and it is obvious that not a great deal of humanitarian psychiatry was placed at her service.

Humanitarian psychiatry places much more emphasis on consolation, and shows less interest in classification.<sup>77</sup> At the beginning, humanitarian psychiatry was an ethical practice in the eighteenth century but it became a medical discipline presupposing a diagnosis (... medicaments...) and a classification. Thus, it is why I find that Kane's plays are a testimony to a hidden quantum of solace as humanitarian psychiatry. Solace, which at first she could not find as a mental ill patient, and secondly, which she demands through her plays.

Kane's project reinvents a process of looking as it negotiates the process of representation and spectatorship by an insistence on a collapse of comfortable critical distance. Although her performances represent a distance too close for comfort and they insist that the horror they depict is real as a speaker in *4.48's* maintains: "The defining feature or a metaphor is that it's real" (211) the search for comfort is permanent and goes beyond the performance, it is the hidden text that is the hidden *quantum*.

These uncomfortable performances demand a performative response to their violence but do not suggest what that response should be. Kane's work poses ethical challenges to its spectators. The ethical response is the search for comfort, for solace. These representations look for what they do not offer by means of disturbing the comfortable critical distance.

In conclusion, Kane's desire to represent "despair and brutality" demands the performance of a pre-existing system of violence present in all her plays. Although this

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<sup>77</sup> ( ref. Goldstein J (1987). *Console and Classify: The French Psychiatric Profession in the 19th Century*. Cambridge University Press.

parade of cruelty is excessive, however, linguistically it is economical and hidden and it is poetry, which obtains a hidden *quantum* of solace, as we will see in the next section: Language as *Solacium*.

*She feeds Ian with the remaining food (Blasted, 61)*



Lyric Hammersmith Theatre, London, November 2010.

Photography taken by Simon Kane (Sarah Kane's brother)

## 2. Exploring *Terrae Incognitae* through Different Voices: *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis*. Language as *Solacium*

Thanks to her use of poetry and prose poems in her theatre, she achieves redemption, catharsis and solace albeit in a hidden form, as the title of this thesis suggests (Hidden Quantum of Solace). Thus, Kane's own narrative – from incendiary origins to her terrible end – has to be in cognition with poetry and solace.

The aim of this section is to analyse Kane's last plays - *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis* – by means of exploring her dramatic language in search of a *quantum of solacium*. I have decided to choose language as the object of my exploration since *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis* present verbal scenes, where words have physical consistency and embody pictures, sounds, images, smells...etc. Drama is expressed through words, and the stage space is transformed into a narrative space. This displacement of the material action by verbal action is what caught my attention, since the physical stage itself seems to be ancillary to the *mise-en-scène* of language. Here, language has almost replaced body and is set as the principal scenic element. In this way, the performance features of *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis* are designed to direct attention to the linguistic *mise-en-scène*, and that is why words become physical. What is

more, Kane's use of dramatic language expresses sensory emotions, emotional registers and imaginist story resonances, as it will be shown through this research part.

A convenient starting point for this research is perhaps to give an explanation of its title: "... *terrae incognitae*." The reason for this expression is that Kane's last plays, *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis*, present indeterminate landscapes and resemble mindscapes which the director and/or designer are free to stage as they wish. In *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis*, understanding is only possible through acts of give and take, or what is the interaction between playwright and audience, which, of course, is always a mystery, an incognita, as audiences are different on every occasion.

Through different voices, words which also appear in the title allude to the phrase "bodied spaces" used by Staton B. Garner in his work *Bodied Spaces. Phenomenology and Performance in Contemporary Drama* (4), although he refers there, not only to voices, but also especially to theatrical space. These voices are embodiments of emotions, and simultaneously are characters, subjects, and objects of inquiry.

*Crave* will be analysed under the heading: "Unfamiliar Community of Speakers" by means of a table. This table will discover the central topic of this chapter, as it is an exploration of the dramatic language through different discourses:

- 1- An anti-home discourse.
- 2- A discourse of love.
- 3- A discourse architecture.

Before analysing these discourses, I will argue how Kane in *Crave* experiments with form and language and, as there are no *dramatis personae*, characters are defined simply by letters: A, C, M, B. Again a table will be used to present the distinct anonymous personalities that emerge and interact in the play. As A gathers more personalities than the rest of the voices, the main personalities embodied by this voice will be explained.

Behind the unrelated discourses that these voices seem to emit, we can find discourses which are perfectly structured, and they will be analysed in the following sections of this chapter.

I would also like to stress that, the major aim of this section is to analyse the dramatic language of *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis*. Consequently, the use of Kane's dramatic lyric prose will provide a means for investigating and disclosing unfamiliar aspects and dimensions of thought, emotion and experience. What is more, her dramatic lyric prose perfectly defines the language, the form and the ideas presented in both plays: *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis*.

By the time of *Cleansed*, Kane had abandoned Naturalism entirely, and her last two plays: *Crave* (1998) and *4.48 Psychosis* (2000), largely dispense with formal notions of character and narrative. These last two plays, reminiscent of Samuel Beckett's later work, become far more introspective than *Blasted* and Phaedra's *Love*, exploring individual mindscapes and concentrating upon themes such as loss, the nature of love, and of course suicide, as we can see in the following examples:

I have become so depressed by the fact of my mortality  
that I have decided to commit suicide.

I do not want to live. (4.48 *Psychosis*, 207)

I have resigned myself to death this year  
(bid, 208)

**M:** If you commit suicide you'll only have to come back  
go through it again. (*Crave*, 188)

These two plays are companion pieces, both reflecting a dramatic shift in her work. While visual images were central to her previous plays, these final pieces contain verbal images, and she achieves this through the creation of a distinctly poetic style. Both plays are performance texts with no stage directions, and in the case of *4.48 Psychosis*, no speaker designations. As a result, these two plays offer a wide range of possibilities for directors, as their settings are not defined, whereas in her previous plays Kane had been very particular about providing details of location, such as the "expensive hotel room in Leeds" (*Blasted*, 3).

In *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis*, characters are fragmented into thousands of parts in both, and sometimes disappear as in the case of *4.48 Psychosis*. In Torti Alcayaga's words:

Le théâtre de Kane s'efface doucement du champ de la réalité. Au centre de cette disparition se trouve la défaite du personnage principale entié sémiotique de la représentation. Chez Sarah Kane cet élément, finalement assez rarement remis en cause au théâtre, se défait pièce a pièce, se fragmente en mille moreceaux se répondant les uns dans les autres et recompensant san fin d'autres figures qui sont de la fois les mêmes personajes et des personnages différents. (Torti-Alcayaga, 56-57)

Due to this fragmentation what we can receive is a profound silence:



*Crave* is virtually an actionless piece of word-music and represents a definite continuation of the formal and thematic paths Kane had been following in the previous plays. Here, four people (A,M,C,B), sit on chairs facing the audience and talk to the audience separately. These people are much more like concerted voices in a composition, because this emotionally devastated play seems to aspire to the impact of music. It is more a poem than a play. The overwhelming impression is that the four voices are voices from within and without one's individual life, yet the stage is occupied by four real bodies. Fragments of speech reveal a litany of rape, infidelity, loneliness, familial rejection, romantic rejection and childlessness. Each voice has a set response to what life has done to them – anger, indignity, baffled argumentativeness and near hysteria, respectively – and this is maintained at a consistently high pitch throughout. The play is gritty, graphic and provokes great emotions. The key here is the insistence on what life "does" to people. The voices are embittered, dismayed and often bewildered by an existence over which they have no control. The complete lack of communication between them reinforces the isolation to which they are all condemned, and when the issue of blame and responsibility finally touches its head, it is in the supremely narcissistic form of righteous self-loathing. Besides, the voices' pain is as psychological as it is physical. *Crave* ends in a falling towards light. It suggests, like in *Cleansed* and *Blasted*, an ambiguous redemption. *Crave* is considered her most mature play and was performed under the pseudonym of Maire Kelvedon so that it could be viewed without the taint of its author's notorious reputation for scandal.

4.48 *Psychosis* is Kane's most experimental play and was completed shortly before she died. Her shortest and most fragmented theatrical work dispenses not only with plot but also with character and no indication is given as to how many actors were intended to voice the play. The title refers to 4:48 a.m. a time which is mentioned more than once in the play. According to Greig (Kane, xvi) the title derives from the time –4.48 am — when Kane, in her depressed state, frequently woke in the morning. Therefore, 4.48 *Psychosis* is a report from a region of the mind that most of us hope never to visit but from which many people cannot escape. In this text, Kane pushes further still the formal elements she had explored in *Crave*. The writing consists of monologues and fragments of dialogues taking place

between figures that resemble a doctor and a patient. Unnamed, the voice of authority might also be a lover, a friend, or perhaps the patient's own dialogue with these voices.

The whole play describes the internal landscape of suicidal psychosis. A landscape even more extreme and pitiless even than those she has presented in her describes four previous plays. 4.48 *Psychosis* is an act of generosity by the author because it was written whilst suffering from depression, which is a destructive rather than creative condition.

Finally, according to Greig these last two plays are not really the play of an author given to the readers, they are more than that, as he states:

The challenge for the reader in Kane's last two plays is not to search for the author behind the words but freight the plays with our own presence, our own fears of the self-destructive act and our own impulses towards it. (Greig, xviii)

## 2.1 Unfamiliar Community of Speakers: *Crave*

The following table will determine the central topic of this chapter, which is an examination of *Crave's* language through different discourses: an anti-home discourse, a discourse of love, and also an examination of the discourse architecture, considering its poetic qualities and intertextuality. Each word of this title stands for one of the discourses which are going to be analyzed:

UNFAMILIAR	COMMUNITY	OF SPEAKERS
An anti-home discourse	<p>A discourse of love.</p> <p>According to the Oxford dictionary, "community" means condition of sharing, having things in common.</p> <p>In <i>Crave</i> the community of four voices as characters _ A, B, C, M- share their craving for love: "If love would come"(166)</p>	Discourse architecture

According to Ruby Cohn, "Kane's theatre might be summarized in three styles" (Cohn, 39). Again a table will help to understand Cohn's idea:

<i>Blasted</i> <i>Cleansed</i>	Violent
<i>Phaedra's Love</i>	A free adaptation of Seneca's <i>Phaedra</i> also sharing violence.
<i>Crave</i> <i>4.48 Psychosis</i>	Linguistic

There are many reasons to consider *Crave* as "a linguistic play because its emphasis, its paucity of scenic directions and its abundance of dialogue" (Cohn, 39). In this way, what Kane does in *Crave* is to experiment with form and language. In this sense "*Crave* is Kane's most searching and poetic text because her use of language is richer, more allusive and more sensuous than before" (Sierz, 118).

In a similar line of argument David Rabey states:

*Crave* amplifies Artaudian and Beckettian resonances, concerning the destruction of the defense mechanisms of the ego, the surfacing of the warring focus and internalized voices within the individual psyche, and provoking and accelerating of impulses to radical separation." (Rabey, 370).

Thus, Vicky Featherstone's première of *Crave* chose to visualize the play by imbuing the banal form of the television chat-show with a Beckettian relentlessness and wry humour in delivering:



*CRAVE* (L to R) Ingrid Craigie; Alan Williams, Eileen Walsh, Andrew Scott, Ingrid Craigie; Ingrid Craigie, Andrew Scott. Photography by Ivan Kyncl (08 September 1998 - 03 October 1998).

Again according to Rabey:

The open form of the play does not prelude physicalisation, as demonstrated by Charmian Savill's practical exploration of the text with students at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1999. This interpreted the text as relentlessly physicalised and dangerous athletic "*black circus* " (378).

This means that the voices are not present as actors playing the roles of A, M, B, C, only as hidden voices performing these roles, or as off-stage voices.

*Crave* charts the disintegration of a human mind under the pressure of love, loss and desire, in an unnamed city from which voices and images spring, marking a departure in Kane's work. The result is lyrical, bringing into action language like music, by means of working powerfully through a series of disconnected meditations that fluctuate between the intensely personal and the powerfully abstract. Furthermore, *Crave* is an exploration of surreal humorous emotions and also as its title implies *Crave* "is about aching need and suggests that what we most crave may be the same thing that cripples us emotionally" (Sierz, 118).

Crave's dramatic universe is created as an extension of the human mind which intersects, merges and dissolves a sometimes unknown world, lying outside everyday experience. In terms of dramatic structure Kane arrives at a "static simplicity" (Voigts-Virchow, 210) because there are no *dramatis personae*, characters are defined simply by letters- C, B, M, A-. According to Kane, this is "a play for four voices" (qtd. in Saunders, 104). These voices are always present on stage and are the dramatic characters. These four voices interact in *Crave*, and they emerge as distinct personalities from multiple perspectives. A table can be drawn to present these distinct anonymous personalities:

<b>A</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
An older man	An older woman	A young man	

The Author (herself)			
Abuser	Mother	Boy	Girl
Aleister		David	
Crowley			
Antichrist			
Arse-hole (her brother's nickname)			
Andrew (an actor)			
B and C cast M in the role of their mother.			

It has to be emphasized that these four voices are embodiments of emotions, although one can also see the body of the actors. As embodiments of emotions "A" gathers more emotions than the other voices. A's emotions are scattered through several personalities: Antichrist, Abuser and Aleister Crowley, the most outstanding because they are symbols of the themes of sexual desire, cruelty, pain, torture -both psychological and physical- and death that are also present in the play. The following are examples that refer to A as Antichrist or make allusions to Antichrist's wishes:

A Satan, my lord, I am yours. (199)

A But God has blessed me with the mark of Cain. (195)

A Dark angel divine. (177)

A Death is an option. (173)

(This quotation suggests suicide against God's desires)

A I'm the beast at the end of the rope. (187)

(The beast is equal to the Devil in the Gospel)

This Antichrist is also paradoxically presented as a kind of hero, because of his ability to transgress norms of social behaviour, but becomes far more introspective than Romantic heroes, due to the fact that Kane explores its individual mindscape through a brutal truthfulness, showing that God's protective mark, "But God has blessed me with the mark of Cain" (195), is in fact a promise of eternal suffering and God's love, supposed to be a redemption, is a destruction for those born with the mark of Cain:

**A** Only love can save me and love has destroyed me. (174)

This brutal truthfulness leads to the treatment of isolation where A turned into Faust is something of a hero simply because he has gone further in experience than others. Thus, in violating law, he acquires a depth of experience that others lack. Moreover, this experience that others lack involves the most total destruction of the old self in order to make room for the new:

**A** Death is my lover and he wants to move in. (180)

Notwithstanding, this kind of spiritual rebirth, under the total destruction of the old self, is also valid for the rest of the voices, and it is clearly seen towards the end of the play:

**B** Here I am, once again, here I am, here I am, here I am, in  
the darkness, once again,

**A** On the edge of nothing,

**B** Here I am,

**C** Hold my hand.

**A** Glory be to the Father,

**M** The truth is behind you,

**B** I'd give it all up for you,

**C** Into the light,

**A** As it was in the beginning,

**C** Beyond the darkness,

**M** And ever shall be,

**B** Into the light,

(197)

As an abuser A links with Aleister Crowley's behaviour:

**A** I am a paedophile.

(157)

Then Kane chooses in A a possible Aleister Crowley. She wishes to develop the transubstantiation of Demon in touch with a magician, in order to see the occult, the hidden knowledge. As Ignacio Gómez de Liaño says (referring to Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition) "El trato con los demonios despierta en el mago capacidades de ver"(236), and also because "El mago que ha hecho de su mente hospedería de los demonios, olla en la que los demonios mecen sus escrituras del mundo, absorbe en sí mismo lo que sobre el mundo y en el mundo, son capaces de decir y de obrar los demonios" (236).

We have to bear in mind that Crowley (1875-1947), during his 72 years on earth, managed to indelibly imprint himself on the Western Magical Tradition, indeed, to many he was the "Western Magical Tradition." He possessed a wide knowledge on Eastern mystical systems- Hinduism, Buddhism, Tantra...etc. In his hedonistic life he was a writer, poet, yogi, occultist, astrologer, philosopher, mountain climber, drug user and sexual revolutionary. Not only did Crowley like to be associated with the number 666, but also believed he was the reincarnation of famous occultists such as Eliphas Levi, Count Cagliostro, Pope Alexander VI, and Elizabethan angel interpreter Edward Kelley. The kinds of women that were attracted to him were innocent girls that committed suicide after becoming alcoholics and drug fiends (e.p).<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, he was accused of being a pedophile, as A a self-proclaimed paedophile, exposed himself to his grand-daughter (in a parked car, and both are marked by the experience, which Kane emphasizes by using the word "hurtling"):

**A** In a lay-by on motorway going out of the city, or  
maybe in, depending on which way you look, a small  
dark girl sits in the passenger seat of a parked car. Her  
elderly grandfather undoes his trousers and it pops out of

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<sup>78</sup> This abbreviation- e.p- is used within parentheses in the running text since it is sometime difficult to determine the page of an Internet publication. Here the ideas taken from the internet resource : ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aleister\\_Crowley](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aleister_Crowley)).

his pants, big and purple. (157-58)

C And has been hurtling<sup>79</sup> away from that moment ever since. (159)

A ..... I shudder with grief for that moment which I've been hurtling away from ever since. (177)

In *Crave* Kane disdains the plot lines of her earlier plays. Thus, the narrative strands are not chronological and she contours two May-January relationships:

#### M & B

**M**, middle woman, craves a child from B, younger man but **M** does not love him.

#### A & C

**A**, older man < relationship with > **C**, younger girl.

Relationship: unequal, abusive, torturer, unreciprocated.

These two love affairs are not sufficiently defined to be called plot-strands; perhaps "plot shades" (Cohn, 47) is a more accurate word, because "the play can be read in several different ways: as an account of two couples, as one mind's mental collapse or even as the overlapping feeling of four people who've never met" (Sierz, 118). The affair of B and M seems more casual, the former attracted to an older woman, who wants a child. The other one (A towards C) is the central axis of this exhibition of love emotions.

*Crave* is also an example of montage technique with different voices, emitting unrelated discourses. The union of all these discourses in the same performance takes a new relationship into the mind of the spectator, becoming a montage.

The play uses the technique of modernist montage in order to articulate the resistance to the anxiety of intermedial influence of TV and film. Considering *Crave* as an emulation of "chat show format" (Saunders, 138) without making it explicit, we have to bear in mind that

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<sup>79</sup> This is my emphasis, it is not in the text.



Kane does not follow this emulation in a conventional way. She emulates this medium only as a confrontation with the over-powering influence of the mass media. In Philip Aulander's words:

The general response of live performance to the oppression and economic superiority of mediatised forms has been to become as much like them as possible. (7)

However, behind these unrelated discourses, we can find discourses perfectly which are structured. These are: an anti-home discourse and a discourse of love, which are the main object of this study. Apart from these discourses, the discourse architecture will also be analyzed, because Kane planned *Crave* as "deliberately experimentation with form and language and rhythm and music" (Saunders, 101). In her own words she also wanted to find out "how good as a poet she could be while still writing something dramatic" (Saunders, 101). The following example illustrates this poetic searching:

C My laughter a bubble of despair. (181)

### 2.1.1 An Anti-home Discourse

In this section, I will attempt to explain how the discourse in *Crave* searches for a new spatiality, looking at the idea of language as a place and following Chauduri in this field.<sup>80</sup>

Due to the massive and agonizing dislocations of the modern age, what we see in *Crave* is a transmutation of place, which means a problem of place. These dislocations range from the micro to the macro spatial in order to chart the disintegration of a human mind in an unnamed city in a non-specific place. This disintegration appears in various orders of location under the pressure of love, loss and desire. Thus, the problem of place, responds to the pressures of a world increasingly defined by mental and physical displacements, as we can appreciate in the following example from *Crave*:

C That's me. Exist in the swing. Never still, never one thing  
or the other, always moving from one extreme to the  
furthest reaches of the other. (194)

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<sup>80</sup> Chauduri, Una. (1997) *Staging Place. A Geography of Modern Drama*. Michigan: The University of Michigan Press.

This process of collapse is born inside us , a bastard that kicks us, as Kane writes:

**B** Something inside me that kicks like a bastard. (172)

Kane wishes to show the audience how men survive in this world from an unnamed city to a closer space, standing outside and inside and not being able to escape, with constant voices coming in and out (here there are four: A, B, C, M), without a predetermined location. Furthermore, "*Crave* also resembles a sinister tour around a city at night, where people's faces are suddenly lit up in the headlights of passing cars, then consumed by the dark" (Sierz, 119).

The voices of *Crave* appear in a non-circumscribed and unclearly defined place (the city is not named). Although there are direct references to New York in the play, these references serve to model the presences of people, or in Phyllis Nagy's words:

In *Crave* the city weaves its way strongly into the thing the characters speak about.

(Saunders, 158)

To illustrate the absence of a predetermined location in *Crave*, we can analyze the setting of Ostermeier's production (*Gier*) in March 2005, at the Schaubühne Berlin, which has the four actors speaking urgently into microphones. If we analyze "the systematic encoding" (Elam, 57), *i.e.*, the kinesics, proxemic, vestimentary, cosmetic, pictorial, musical and architectural conditions for rendering the text, the first factor that we see in this setting is the total lack of action. Here kinesics<sup>81</sup> have the following components: gestures, facial expressions and posture changes, because they are sat on the same chairs for the whole the performance, and we cannot analyze other movements of the body on stage and also because language is the action of the play. The proxemic relations,<sup>82</sup> *i.e.*, the analysis of the stage space is focused, above all, in a nearly empty space without a predetermined location, with the four actors speaking urgently into microphones and sat on chairs, which are on four

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<sup>81</sup> Defined as "all communicative body movements" (Elam, 62).

<sup>82</sup> Proxemic means how characters relate with objects, space or with other characters and "the theatrical text is defined and perceived above all in spatial terms " (Elam, 50).

platforms. The lights are directed on the four platforms not on the four actors which means that we cannot appreciate the vestimentary, cosmetic and pictorial element:



The following picture is from Marius von Mayenburg's production in December 1999. He produced a Dutch version of *Crave*, where the voices were placed in the interior of a cathedral in the same row between two benches and with light coming from three stained glass windows:



Here this setting, as the interior of a cathedral, serves to emphasize the idea of the four voices in moments prior to a confession.

The next image is from a performance of *Crave* (*Gier* in German) at the Centre Cultural Odysée, Eybens, France in January 2006 directed by Wanda Golenka:



What we see in this setting is a kind of balcony or ship deck with the four voices. Here the characters bodies are clearly seen. They seem as if they are not able to escape and they have to survive in this close claustrophobic space. However, they are not sat down on chairs to give more the impression of wandering minds.

In this way, *Crave* shows how the homogeneous Western bourgeois idea of the figure of the home is disappearing. And how does Kane visualize this? She rewrites the discourse of home and family into a new one. She shows the dissolution of the family from four voices: A, M, C and B who are going to narrate their different emotional experiences, which are experiences about love, abuse and betrayal. The figure and the discourse of home, of Western bourgeois culture, becomes an "anti-home" discourse.

By choosing a community of four voices, whose roles could be associated with couples, Kane represents emotional experiences. Successively, the voices are going to develop an "anti-home" discourse from the context of a discourse of love with a transgressive, forbidden fatal sexuality among other facets:

**A** Long before I had the chance to adore all of you, I adored  
the bits of you I could see. (172)

**B** Now I have found you I can stop looking for myself (178)

**B** And don't you think that a child conceived by rape would  
suffer? (162)

**M** You think I 'm going to rape you? (163)

M Have you ever raped anyone? (164)

C I've faked orgasms before, but this is the first time I've  
faked *not* having an orgasm. (182)

A You're always gorgeous, but you're particularly gorgeous  
when you come. (171)

The inadequacy of home runs parallel in the speeches of the four voices:

C That's me. Exist in the swing. Never still, never one thing  
or the other, always moving from one extreme to the  
furthest reaches of the other. (194)

M The heat is going out of me. (156)

A (...) no calling at home then  
hanging up in silence. (181)

Here, what we can appreciate is a discourse based on exile from home. The ambitions of these voices (A, B,C,M) also masquerade the ideological crisis in which we live, meaning to be doomed to dance on a volcano, far away from an invitation to a *home*.

Therefore, this discourse about home is, in fact, an anti-discourse of *home sweet home*, which serves to highlight the effect that Kane wants, as it is to show the things that are real to modern man: the status of archetypical suffering as an unavoidable part of the *conditio humana*, or human condition. Although Kane does not offer any solutions, what she does is to take us to spaces of truth and knowledge about the human condition, and while we are doomed to dance on a figurative volcano and perceive all the excrement that comes out of its mouth, Kane helps us to see the truthfulness of our dance, or as explained by Julia Kristeva: "the ego threatened by the non-ego, society threatened by its outside, life by death" (Kristeva, 71). As a reaction or even resistance to the vicissitudes of life, we sometimes become addicted to drugs, love or even mind displacements. In *Crave*, almost the entire speech is devoted to describing the kinds of addictions that lead to loss:

**B** A sporadic addict.

**B** Addicted to sickness (168)

**B** ... the balance has  
has gone. The balance has gone. The balance my baby  
has gone. (193)

**A** I am lost, so fucking lost in this mess of a woman. (171)

**C** How did I lose you?

**A** You throw me away (185)

Therefore, as a final word, with *Crave* Kane transgresses the domestic interior of naturalistic drama to take us to an unspecific space, in order to expand her anti-bourgeois-home discourse there.

### 2.1.2 A Discourse of Love

**M** If love would come.

(160 and 166)

In less than five years Kane wrote five plays about love. However, each play presents a different approach and also a different technique. She cannot be categorized, because she never stood still and explored different feelings in different styles in all her plays.

Although the discourse of love is spoken by millions of people, diffused in our popular romances and television programmes as well as in serious literature, there is no institution that explores or judges, or otherwise assumes, responsibility for this discourse. We owe Kane the tribute of examining this aspect, albeit dispassionately, in order to focus on the topic without possible corrosive sentimentality.

In *Crave* (as in the rest of her plays) Kane shows love as the main focus of interest. Thus, *Blasted*, *Phaedra's Love* and *Cleansed* - share with *Crave* the sense of corruption and obsession mixed with ownership, which is present in love relations, as well as the

domination of one character by the other. For example, in *Blasted* love is seen as a source of ownership, corruption, obsession and finally of a breakdown, where bombs and guns are present in this supposed love; even though there are glimpses of true love, as can be seen in Ian's words especially in this last sentence:

**Cate** You hurt me.

**Ian** No, I love you. (17)

**Ian** ... That's why I love you, want to  
make love to you.

**Cate** But you can't.

**Ian** Why not?

**Cate** I don't want to. (23)

**Cate** Do you think it's hard to shoot someone?

**Ian** Easy as shitting blood.

**Cate** Could you shoot me ? (20)

**Cate** Do it. Go on, shoot me. Can't be no worse than what  
you've done already. Shoot me if you want, then turn  
it on yourself and do the world a favour. (34)

**Ian** ... Punish me or rescue me makes  
no difference I love you Cate... (51)

However, *Crave* is a remarkable departure in style and form from the first three plays, being a dramatic love poem. In *Crave*, the brevity of love is seen as "a pure portion of anxiety" (Barthes, 15) with destructive and panic situations as the principal theme. This nature of love, which moves towards brevity and panic, towards death and anxiety is clearly seen in the overwhelming uncontrollable and irresistible great love and desire that A directs at C, because this declaration of love is as well a poetic form of degradation, of ruin:

**A** (...)

wonder why you don't believe me and have a feeling so deep I can't find words for it and want to buy a kitten I'd get jealous of because it gets more attention than me and keep you in bed when you have to go and cry like a baby when you finally do and get rid of the roaches and buy you presents you don't want and take them away again and ask you to marry me and you say no *again* but keep on asking because though you think I don't mean it I do always have from the first time I asked you and wander the city thinking it's empty without you and want what you want and think I'm losing myself but know I'm safe with you and tell you the worst of me and try to give you the best of me because you don't deserve any less and answer your questions when I'd rather not and tell you the truth when I really don't want to and try to be honest because I know you prefer it and think it's all over but hang on in for just ten more minutes before you throw me out of your life and forget who I am (...)  
(170)

El amor me corroe  
constante pongo mi fe en Ella,  
pero la lanza espesa atravesará mi mente  
y recorro el desierto mendigando  
unos instantes de consolación.

Me despierto llorando de cuclillas en el rincón  
sombrio de la alcoba.

(Costafreda, 261)

The lines of this poem show us the nature of love, as a form of ruin, especially in "mendigando unos instantes de consolación" which is going to appear in *Crave*. The following examples can also illuminate this image of A's love tending towards annihilation:

A Death is my lover and he wants to move in. (180)

A Only love can save me and love has destroyed me. (174)

This last example exemplifies the constant reversibility that appears in the play, i.e. echoing Rabey "the text is alternately aphoristic and desperate, associative and wryly separated, self-mockingly ironic and proudly obsessive" (Rabey, 377). With these reversibility contrasts Kane can show that love is usually followed by destruction: "A Only love can save me and love has destroyed me" (174).



*Crave* is a tale of dysfunctional relationships played out in a kind of claustrophobic setting mixing a forbidden love with the relationship between two people who cannot live with or without each other:

**B** I think about you

**A** Dream about you

**B** Talk about you

**A** Can't get you out of my system (173)

**C** If I could be free without having to lose you. (155)

When two people form a relationship a kind of occupation is forced. It means that someone will be abused and "power structures will come into play" according to Billington (qtd. in Saunders, 107). This aspect of power structures can be clearly seen in the last examples: "C If could be free without having to lose you." (155)

Kane shows the correspondence between the two elements in a relationship: a strong desire for a relationship followed by obsession, corruption, ownership and breakdown as a consequence of a strong desire in one of the persons that stops this relationship from working. A longing for a life renewal and at the same time a longing to escape it are constantly interwoven in Kane's couples:

**M** A cold fuck and a goldfish memory. (181)

**M** I looked for you. All over the city.<sup>83</sup> (156)

**M** I was catching a plane. A psychic predicted that I would not get on this flight but that my lover would. The plane would crash and he would be killed. I didn't know what to do. If I missed the flight, I would be fulfilling the prophecy so risking my lover's death. But in order to break the prophecy I would have to get on a plane, which seemed destined to crash. (176)

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<sup>83</sup>This is an oblique echo of Joy Division's suicidal lyrics of loss, self-disgust and violent depression: "To the centre of the city at night Looking for you." ("*Shadowplay*" Curtis, 162)

These voices are looking for genuine emotions and/or fulfilling relationships with a "real" other:

**M** I want a real life,

**B** A real love, (190)

This search for otherness is a means to escape the web of the only remaining valid credo that is the belief in money and the market. As Ravenhill says in *Shopping and Fucking* "Civilization is money. Money is civilization" (Ravenhill, 84-85). Money and sex pretend to resolve the search for otherness. Thus, human relationships become a kind of financial transactions. These kind of financial transactions are an image of the futility of life. Moreover, love-relationships share this futility of life. The following comments made by A and C serve as meta-truths about life in contemporary society:

**A** My life is nothing special

**C** A stream of haphazard events like any other, (196)

**A** A stream into a salty ocean that stings, it stings, but does not kill. (191)

**A** And life to the bitter in soul (193)

**C** I'm not ill, I just know that life is not worth living.

**A** I've lost my faith in honesty. (188)

**A** All the totally predictable and sickening futility that is our relationship. (190)

Furthermore, as a mirror of life in contemporary society in *Crave* "la caricia se vuelve golpe" (Liaño, 238):

**M** A mother beats her child savagely because it runs out in front of a car. (161)

**C** I watched my father beat my mother with a walking stick. (179)

**B** Besos brujos que me matan. (176)

**A** A small girl became increasingly paralyzed by her parents' frequently violent rows. (185)

These quotations provide examples of different forms of abuse which are endured under the mask of love, and can be experienced in romantic and family relationships.

Analyzing other aspects of this discourse of love we can observe how Kane, like a magician, depicts the hidden emotion of love. She breaks down the gates that stop our imagination to present the unrevealed as a constant anatomy of melancholy:

**A** You've fallen in love with someone that doesn't exist.  
(190)

**B** My heart is broken. (191)

**B** The spine of my life is broken.

**B** If you were here. (193)

This constant anatomy of melancholy is below the surface of love, and it is what Kane discovers by breaking the gates to present the hidden. *Crave* has a non-destructive aspect as it is a hidden emotion that appears in lovers:

**M** If love would come. (160)

**B** A real love,

**A** One that is rooted and grows upwards in daylight. (190)

However, the lover's emotion is always sunk in gloom, because as A says: "You've fallen in love with someone that doesn't exist" (190). This blind vision of the lover leads to a kind of prison where freedom has nothing to do with love, so C's words testimonies this lack of freedom in love "If I could be free of you without having to lose you." (155).

Following Barthes' theories in "*A lover's Discourse. Fragments*" the conditions of the rejected lover and the prisoner in Dachau are not dissimilar, in the sense than the experience is dehumanizing to such a degree that it came close to the negation of the prisoners' human dignity in concentration camps before they were killed:

The amorous catastrophe may be close to what has been called, in the psychotic domain, and *extreme situation*, a situation experienced by the subject as irremediably bound to destroy him; the image is drawn from what occurred at Dachau. (Barthes 48-49)

Thus, it is important to note that A experiences a never ending love towards C mixed with guilt. This never ending love, which of course served to depict a constant anatomy of melancholy in love, ends in loss, in deep pain and represents Barthes' idea of *extreme situation*, lived by the rejected lover:

A ... I want  
to see you and I will lie to you from day one and use you  
and screw you and break your heart because you broke  
mine first and you will love me more each day until the  
weight is unbearable and your life is mine and you'll die  
alone because I will take what I want then walk away  
and owe you nothing it's always there it's always been  
there and you cannot deny the life you feel fuck that life  
fuck that life fucks that life I have lost you now.

(178)

A Guilt lingers like the smell of death and nothing can free  
me from this cloud of blood. (184)

*Crave* is essentially a fugue, a kind of elegy on the theme love and also in many others such as nihilism, despair... In Featherstone's words "*Crave* was absolutely rooted in twentieth century pain" (Saunders, 108). An example from the play, given in the following quotations, illustrates what has been said about suffering:

C I am looking for a time and place free of things that crawl,  
fly or sting. (165)

C Listen. I am here to remember. I need to ... remember.  
I have this grief and I don't know why. (171)

C That's me. Exist in the swing. Never still, never one thing  
or the other, always moving from one extreme to the  
furthest reaches of the other. (194)

Kane forces an impact on our minds in order to make us see this melancholic pain, despair and nihilistic love; an impact that is visually expressed through this poem by Stephen Crane:

A naked woman and a dead dwarf;  
Wealth and indifference.  
Poor dwarf !  
Reigning with foolish kings  
And dying mid bells and wine  
Ending with a desperate comic palaver  
While before thee and after thee  
Endures the eternal clown  
- The eternal clown -  
(Crane, 1351)

The parallelism between "a naked woman" and "a dead dwarf" with the nihilism expressed in *Crave* can be established because this play is not merely poetic, but a poem in itself written also with a bitter sense of humour. In this way, the experience of reading Crane's poem can be compared to the reading of the dramatic love metaphor shown in *Crave*, except that in this case the poem was written for the stage, and here language art and theatre art are drawn together. What is more, the presence of real, living bodies on stage (A, C, M, B) provide anchors for the textual "here" and "now" (Elam, 139).

Kane had a romantic fascination for the pleasures of strong emotions, perhaps because she was good-looking and young and her youth brought her an exuberance of strong emotions. However, there is a great distance between her landscapes of love and the romantics, for instance Lord Byron's landscapes of love, because Kane's work marks her out, not only from that of her so called contemporaries such as Ravenhill or Prichard, but also it distinguishes her work from the above mentioned Lord Byron and his ideas on romantic love:

Though the day of my destiny's over  
And the star of my fate hath declined  
Thy soft heart refused to discover  
The faults which so many could find;  
Though thy soul with my grief was acquainted,

It shrunk not to share it with me,  
And the love which my spirit hath painted  
It never hath found but in thee.<sup>84</sup>

Byron is rooted in the eighteenth century vision of Romanticism and his language of love is too far away from that of ordinary people. Whereas Kane presents a language of love rooted in colloquial poetic vocabulary and she often uses expressions from common speech:

**M** ... .. He  
kissed her on the lips and caressed her breast. (159)

**A** I want to sleep next to you... (168)

**A** ... and kiss your back  
and stroke your skin and tell you how much I love  
your hair your eyes your lips your neck your breasts your  
arse your... (169)

This last quotation shows the fragmentation of the body, women seen as beautiful pieces.<sup>85</sup>

Love embodies two constant opposing struggles, since they represent the loss of control and the desperate need to obtain control Kane was aware of this, according to Kenyon:

She craved a fulfilling and successful relationship, but was torn out by the thought that in giving yourself fully to another you have to negate yourself in some way; and in doing so you literally disappear.

(Quoted in Saunders,148)

Furthermore, jealousy and possessiveness, as well as an overwhelming obsessive concern about sexual performance damages real love, and consequently, this leads us to loss of control. Although it seems as if Kane were trying to look for equality in love relationships, most of the relationships, which are found in her plays, are about inequality. In *Crave* we see this inequality in both relationships, of A towards C and M towards B. The described love

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<sup>84</sup> (Quoted in Poe, 90)

<sup>85</sup> According to my tutor, Dr Eulalia Piñero.

desires of A towards C never coincide, nor in M towards B. A and C repeat the same sentence showing their awareness of the distance between them:

**A** You've fallen in love with someone that doesn't exist. (190)

**C** You've fallen in love with someone that doesn't exist. (158)

There is no coincidence either between M and B:

**B** You fill my head as only someone who is absent can. (187)

**M** None of this matters because I'm simply not in love  
with you. (177)

At the same time erotic love illuminates and blinds and this rapture of the mind leads to a desperate need to retain control. Iris Murdoch declares that erotic love has a potential for violence and extreme selfishness and she also depicts erotic love as a rare source of vision and illumination "A love relationship can occasion extreme selfishness and possessive violence" (Murdoch, 16-17). The kinds of love described by Kane, especially in *Crave*, are in many ways sadomasochistic fantasies of doom and separation, where, by means of a strange beauty and only with a fragmentary hint of narrative, we can see the exploration of love from many different angles such as maternal love, primarily sexual love and abusive love:

(MATERNAL LOVE)

**C** You could be my mother.

**M** I'm not your mother. (173)

**M** I could be your mother.

**B** You are not my mother. (182)

(PRIMARILY SEXUAL LOVE)

**M** I keep telling people I'm pregnant. They say How did you  
do it, what are you taking? I say I drank a bottle of port,  
smoked some fags and fucked a stranger.

(155)

**B** In a day or two I'll go back for another affair, although  
the affair is now so on-going it almost constitutes a  
relationship. (174)

(ABUSIVE LOVE)

**C** In a lay-by on the motorway going out of the city, or  
maybe in, depending on which way you look, a small  
dark girl sits in the passenger seat of a parked car. Her  
elderly grandfather undoes his trousers and it pops out  
of his pants, big and purple. (157-8)

**A** And when she cries, her father in the back seat says I'm  
sorry, she's not normally like this. (158)

**M** You think I'm going to rape you? (163)

**M** Have you ever raped anyone? (164)

**A** A small girl became increasingly paralyzed by her parent's  
frequently violent rows. Sometimes she would spend hours standing  
completely still in the toilet, simply because that was where she  
happened to be when the fight began. Finally in moments of calm,  
she would take bottles of milk from the fridge or doorstep and leave  
them in places where she may later become trapped. Her parents  
were unable to understand why they found bottles of sour milk in  
every room in the house. (185)

**A** A small boy had an imaginary friend. He took her to the  
beach and they played in the sea. A man came from the  
water and took her away. The following morning the body  
of a girl was found washed up on the beach. (163)

With great precision Kane shows the doubts, reproaches, desires, obsessions, and  
melancholies that conform to the landscape of love:



**A** Because love by its nature desires a future. (157)

**C** You get mixed messages because I have mixed feelings.  
(165)

**M** I never met a man I trusted. (161)

**A** I am lost, so fucking lost in this mess of a woman. (171)

**B** There's no one like you. (175)

**B** I think about you

**A** Dream about you

**B** Talk about you

**A** Can't get you out of my system. (173)

**A** HOW CAN YOU LEAVE ME LIKE THIS? (172)

**C** I love you. (190)

What is more, the anxiety of abandonment as a constant delirium, together with the abandonment itself, and the process of waiting for love that leads to a feeling of amputation are present in *Crave*, especially in the love that A directs towards C:

**A** don't say no to me you can't say no to me because it's such  
a relief to have love again and to lie in bed and be held and  
touched and kissed and adored and your heart will leap  
when you hear my voice and see my smile and feel my  
breath on you neck and your heart will race when I want  
to see you and I will lie to you from day one and use you  
and screw you and break your heart because you broke  
mine first and you will love me more each day until the  
weight is unbearable and your life is mine and you'll die  
alone because I will take what I want then walk away...  
(178)

As a final word on this discourse of love, it can be stated that when A says "only love can save me and love has destroyed me." (174). The real nature of love makes its

appearance, because the loved person is in a state of "perpetual departure, of journeying" (Barthes, 13) and "by vocation, migrant and fugitive" (Barthes, 13) which instead of saving, destroys the lover. This amorous destruction functions in a single direction, from the one who hopes to be saved by love, never by the one who leaves and, as a consequence, destroys.

### 2.1.3 The Architecture of Discourse

A And, don't forget that poetry is language for its own sake.  
Don't forget when different words are sanctioned, other  
attitudes required.  
Don't forget decorum.  
Don't forget decorum. (199)

As it has been already stated, Kane experiments with form and language in order to present a link between drama and poetry in the field of prose poem. Her lyrical and piercing language reveals a desperation for love and human contact. This language also reveals an overwhelming sense of despondency, as we have seen in the previous section, and can be further exemplified in the following quotations:

C Don't fill my stomach if you can't fill my heart. (187)

C You can only kill yourself if you're not already dead. (183)

C Cured my body can't cure my soul. (199)

C She's sick to the fucking gills of herself and wishes wishes  
wishes that something would happen to make life begin. (183)

With *Crave* Kane brings language as music into action, performing A's desires "I don't have music, Christ I wish had music but all I have is words" (172). Ravenhill called it "a dense beautiful poem that proved she was a highly versatile talent" (6). Some examples to show this poetic talent:

C Purple heather scratching my legs. (176)

A I look at her breast.

C A balloon of milk.

M Sooner of later.

C A balloon of blood. (177)

A Guilt lingers like the smell of death and nothing can free  
me from this cloud of blood. (184)

C Let the day perish in which I was born  
Let the blackness of the night terrify it  
Let the stars of its dawn be dark  
May it not see the eyelids of the morning  
Because it did not shut the door of my mother's womb  
(189)

In these examples we can appreciate how Kane deploys, as has been said before, language as music, its rhythm and orchestration are as vital as its content to understanding and responding to the play. Furthermore, she had said that she planned the play to be "deliberately an experimentation with form and language and rhythm and music" (Saunders, 101).

Before going on with the discourse architecture, I would like to quote a speech where the title of this play, *Crave*, is heard. This is one of C's speeches:

C I crave white and black, my thoughts race in  
glorious technicolour, prodding me awake, whipping away  
the warm blanket of invisibility every time it swears to  
smother my mind in nothing. (174)

"I 'crave' white and black" are the two extremes or mental landscapes, she is moving in, from one to the other. This "glorious technicolour" (174) of Kane's *Crave* in Cohn's words "is composed of her epigrammatic flair and such verbal techniques as rhyme, meter, fragmentation, contradiction, yes-no sentences, macaronics, quotation, and occasional word-

awareness. These devices are pervasive and they recur in various blends, which are often infused with humour" (Cohn, 44). For example:

C As a child I liked to piss on the carpet.  
the carpet rotted and I blamed it on the dog.  
(167)

One of the main characteristics in *Crave* is its economy of language. Due to its austerity Kane builds the verbal techniques pointed out by Cohn.

In the following subsections we will see "the decorum" of this discourse architecture through an analysis of its poetic qualities and its intertextuality.

### 2.1.3.1 Poetic Qualities

A And don't forget that poetry is language for its own sake.  
(199)

Kane built the scenic architecture of her previous violent plays through acts of cruelty. However, the violence in *Crave* is internalized through images of nihilism, of degeneration and despair, as "a dark edgy poetry" (Voigts-Virchow, 210):

A A black fucking hole of half-love. (189)

A And life to the bitter in soul (193)

M A distant bell crosses the empty sea. (197)

In this "dark edgy poetry" the following verbal techniques serve to capture the phenomenon of the play's poeticization:

Rhyme may be heard in a single line:

C Assimilated but not obliterated (197)

Or it may appear in a couplet:

- B** She wants a kid yesterday  
**A** What will I do when you throw me away? (171)

Or rhyme may be delayed and unaccented:

- B** Are you a lesbian?  
**A** Oh please?  
**B** I thought that might be why you don't have children. (161)

Sustained metrical lines are rare, but stanzaic effects are frequent:

- C** Looks like a German,  
**A** Talks like a Spaniard,  
**C** Smokes like a Serb. (156)

Or:

- C** Leave.  
**B** Where?  
**C** Now.  
**M** There. (157)

The first "stanza" prepares us for the macaronic lines which are heard at approximately equal intervals- one of Kane's dramatic girders:

- B** Base 1  
 Base 2  
 Base 3  
 Bingo (160)  
**C** I didn't  
**A** I don't  
**C** Understand (171)

The second "stanza" mentioned above, contains rhyming words which differ in pitch, since "where?" is a questions and "there" a reply.

Another clear rhyming effect can be seen in the following examples:

**M** Most people,  
**B** They get on,  
**A** They get up,  
**B** They get on. (174)

Or

**M** Why?  
**C** What?  
**B** What what?  
**A** What? (182)

Repeated on page 185 but A changes to C:

**M** Why?  
**C** What?  
**B** What what?  
**C** What?

Or else

**A** I love you still, (4 syllables)  
**B** Against my will, (“ “) (183)

Kane's most frequent scenic direction in *Crave* is "A beat" (Cohn, 45). Due to this beat she separates stanzas in her longest Yes-No sequence. The use of this verbal technique serves to substitute the lack of action and movement in the play:

**C** No.  
**M** Yes.  
**B** No.  
**A** Yes.  
**B** No.  
**C** No.  
**A** Yes.  
*A beat.*

**B** No.  
**C** No.  
**M** Yes.  
**B** No.  
**C** No.  
**A** Yes  
**C** No.  
*A beat.*  
**A** Yes.  
**C** No.  
**B** No.  
**M** Yes.  
**A** Yes.  
**M** Yes.  
**C** (*Emits a short one syllable scream.*)  
*A beat.* (185-86)

The yes and no questions follow a different order in three consecutive stanzas, but each group of seven syllables is always punctuated by a beat. The fourth stanza is composed of seven short one syllable screams and it too ends in a beat:

**C** (*Emits a short one syllable scream.*)  
**B** (*Emits a short one syllable scream.*)  
**M** (*Emits a short one syllable scream.*)  
**B** (*Emits a short one syllable scream.*)  
**A** (*Emits a short one syllable scream.*)  
**M** (*Emits a short one syllable scream.*)  
**C** (*Emits a short one syllable scream.*)  
*A beat.* (187)

The three yes-no sequences are the most blatant forms of contradiction in *Crave*:

**C** Yes.  
**A** No.  
**B** Yes.  
**M** No.  
**A** No.  
**B** Yes.

**C** Yes. (163)

**B** No.

**C** No.

**M** Yes.

**B** No.

**A** Yes.

**C** No.

**M** Yes. (166)

**C** No.

**M** Yes.

**B** No.

**A** Yes.

**C** No.

**B** No.

**M** Yes. (190)

However, there other forms of contradiction can be found earlier and later in the play. As an example:

**C** LEAVE.

**A** COME BACK. (159)

**M** Couldn't love you less.

**B** Couldn't love you more. (194)

Another example of contradictions:

**C** None of it,

**B** All of it, (189)

**C** I hate you

**B** I need you, (189)



There is one example where the voices -- A, B, M, C -- behave like a ventriloquist's dummy, echoing paradoxically strange but beautifully sort of controlled and uncontrolled beautiful contrasts, which are suspended in a kind of limbo backed up by two repetitions at the beginning as in "the vision" (192):

**B** The vision.

**M** The loss.

**C** The pain.

**A** The loss

**B** The gain.

**M** The loss.

**C** The light.

(...)

**C** The vision.

**M** The light.

**C** The pain.

**A** The light.

**M** The gain.

**B** The light.

**C** The loss.

(192)

Thus, the repetition of "the vision" touches an emotional world to evoke supernatural images in the spectator's mind.

It is evident that repetition confers stress. Repetition also enhances meaning and destroys linear narratives. It also serves to examine desperate feelings. For instance B and C both reiterate:

**B** I feel nothing, nothing.

I feel nothing,

(156)

**C** I feel nothing, nothing.

I feel nothing.

(158)

**C** I feel nothing, nothing.

I feel nothing.

(175)

And they vary this with:

**C** I did nothing  
**B** I did nothing (179)

More examples:

**C** No no no no no no no no no (161)

**B** Okay, I was, okay, I was, okay okay. I was, okay, two  
people. (163)

**A** I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry,  
I'm sorry, I'm sorry. (164)

**C** I don't want to stay.  
**B** I don't want to stay. (166)

**M** now now now now now now now (168)

**M** Begin again.  
**A** Begin again. (176)

**B** Begin again, begin again. (177)

Another example of repetition is with the line "You are dead to me" (159) said by C, who opens the play with this line, and she repeats it twice again during the play, (i.e. pages 168 and 196).

B and M protest several times:

It's just. Not Me. (190)

More repetitions:

**C** I knew this  
**B** I knew this (190)

**B** (Quietly, continuously, until the end of A's speech.)

no no no no no no/no no no no no no no no

**A** And don't forget that poetry is language for its own sake.

Don't forget when different words are sanctioned, other  
attitudes required.

Don't forget decorum.

Don't forget decorum. (199)

All these repetitions help to explore anxious emotions because, as its title implies, *Crave* is about an aching need, which charts the disintegration of the human mind, under the pressure of love, loss and desire.

Only twice do the four voices speak together. Early in the play they say:

All STAY. (159)

And towards the end of the play they speak together again as if they were a chorus:

All Forget. (199)

In fact, these words spoken together by the four voices echo the discourse of love spoken by millions of people, diffused in television programs and serious literature as well as in popular romances or songs. The following part of a popular song by Jacques Brel composed in 1959, may serve as an example of this love discourse that the voices refer to, when they say the words "stay" and "forget":

Ne me quitte pas

il faut oublier

tout peut s'oublier

(...)

Laisse-moi devenir

l'ombre de ton ombre,

l'ombre de ta main,

l'ombre de ton chien.

Mais, ne me quitte pas.

( "*Don't leave me*" Brel, e.p)<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Brel, Jacques: <http://www.paroles.net/chansons/18952.htm>

All four voices crave love, but it is also an affliction and, as it has been stated previously that "what we most crave may be the same thing that cripples us emotionally" (Sierz, 118):

**A** I fucking miss you. (177)

**B** I miss fucking you. (178)

Although most of the dialogue exchanges are short, the pedophile, torturer, Aleister Crowley (...), A has an extended two page-speech in print and "at least two minutes in stage time" (Cohn, 116). The form of this speech is perhaps influenced by Lucky's monologue in *Waiting for Godot* (Cohn, 46) as A gives vent to an asyntactical rush of everyday clichés about the cravings of love, which terminate, however in a series of progressive polysyllables:

**A** And I want to play hide-and-seek and give you my  
clothes and tell you I like your shoes and sit on the steps  
while you take a bath and massage your neck and kiss  
your feet and hold your hand and go for a meal and not  
mind when you eat my food and meet you at Rudy's and  
(...)  
(...)  
and somehow somehow somehow communicate  
some of the/ overwhelming undying overpowering  
unconditional all-encompassing heart-enriching  
mind-expanding on-going never-ending love I have  
for you. (169-170)

Furthermore this speech, according to Kenneth Urban is "a lengthy catalogue of a lover's wishes, culled from the banal and sentimental images of pop culture, revealed the logic of obsession, a textual outburst of hysteria meant to be spoken quickly" (497). These sentimental images of pop culture are accompanied by C's repetitions of "this has to stop" (170). The everyday cliché "never-ending love I have for you" (170) is in fact a hidden allusion to the nomadic love that wanders through the mind of these voices - A, B, C, M - looking for a love that rescues their lives.

Another verbal technique is for instance the following fragmented quotation from *Hamlet*'s famous soliloquy:

- A** Tragedy.  
**B** Really.  
**M** Oh yes.  
**A** What do you want?  
**C** To die.  
**B** To sleep.  
**M** No more. (158)

This soliloquy is fragmented by Kane giving its words to different characters and speech specks are spread over these voices to form one of her characteristically anaphoric and elliptic units.

It is important to notice how most of the time these voices feign solitude, appearing to soliloquize in absolute dissociation. It is also tempting to isolate the two juxtaposed dialogues, on the one hand that of A, an eloquent abuser and an older man, and C, a victim of abuse and a younger woman; and on the other, of M, an older woman, who desires a child but no lover, and B, a younger man (brother), who does not seem to be able to fulfill this role. Thus, the words are spoken into an unspecified abstract neutral space, where the only location to be found for the language is the diachronic investigation of referent texts of the past:

- C** And then at the paisley green cushion, a thoroughly  
inappropriate cushion to represent any part of me,  
especially the parts I am showing to her. (172)  
**M** Every time I have an egg I stick the shell on there and  
spray it.  
**C** She sees through walls.  
**B** Will. You. Make. Me. One. (161)  
  
**M** Do you want a message? (166)  
**C** I write the truth and it kills me. (184)

Critics consider *Crave* to be as theatrical poetry because there is a dissolution of characters which veers towards four speaking voices or:

I's, who create their space in language. (Voigts-Virchow, 211).

Besides, Voigts-Virchow adds:

In absence of a dramatic situation the audience is asked to address the situation constructed within the language either by four interdependent voices or the splintered voices of a single consciousness. (Voigts-Virchow, 212).

As M comments in a typical self reflective way:

**M** You stop thinking of yourself as I, you think of we. (161)

In this "dialogue-driven play"(Cohn, 46) half the play is over when **A** remarks in frustration:

**A** I am lost, so fucking lost in this mess of a woman. (171)

**A** I am so tired. (174)

**A** And I am shaking, sobbing with the memory of her, (...)  
(177)

**A** (...)  
and you cannot deny the life you feel fuck that life fuck that  
life that life I have lost you now. (178)

According to Torti-Alcayaga, in her article "L' oeuvre de Sarah Kane : le théâtre de la défaite," A expresses the pain of his mind through his words "ainsi la douleur de la conscience exprimée par le langage chez A" (56), because in *Crave* words rather than incidents build the work. Thus, the architecture of this play is complex, expressed as we have already seen through recurrent repetition and a wasteland imagery in its figures of nihilism, degeneration and despair:

**M** A cold fuck and a goldfish memory. (181)

**A** Guilt lingers like the smell of death and nothing can free  
from this cloud of blood. (184)

Other verbal devices that cement the structure are the macaronic lines threaded through the whole play, for instance:

**B** All lies.

**A** Still here. (155)

**B** Where you been? (157)

This verbal device is in fact one of the most important because this liberal mixture of words and sentences that can be defined as macaronic lines, is spread throughout the text.

There are also poetic methods evident in *Crave* that allow the architecture of the play to be constructed; among others:

-The regularity of anaphora, epiphora and parallelism as well and syntactic ellipsis and paratactic enumeration, the rhythmic culmination into common utterance, rhyme (we have seen some examples) paradoxes, stichomythic antitheses leading up to repeated climatic cries, the phonological bonding or chiming, alliteration, asyndeton and polysyndeton and similes and metaphors. The following examples can offer an evidence for these poetic methods used in *Crave*:

Anaphora: the repetition of a word or expression at the beginning of successive phrases, sentences, or verses.

**B** Have another drink, another cigarette . (160)

Epiphora: is repetition of a word or expression at the end of successive phrase sentences or verses.

**M** I have a black side I know, I have a side so green you will  
never know

Consonance alliteration this example also gives a comic effect.

**A** There're worse things than being fat and fifty. (167)

Similes and metaphors, for example "...a goldfish memory" (181), which connected with "...dragon eyes" and "gills" (183) form a "fishy" metaphorical pattern (Voigts-Virchow, 212).

It has to be added that the monosyllabic destitution is reminiscent of Bond's *Saved*, a play Kane very much admired:

**Len.** Cold?

**Pam.** No.

**Len.** Still pecky?

**Pam.** Yeh. (Bond, 16)

Whereas the attempts to construct and control identities echo Pinter's stage language, eg, Golberg's hilarious identity construction in the *Birthday Party*:

You know what? I never lost a tooth. Not since the day I was  
born (...). (Pinter, 87)

In A's speech:

I don't drink. I hate smoking. I'm vegetarian. I don't fuck  
around. I've never visited a prostitute and I've never had a  
sexually transmitted disease other than thrush. This does,  
I'm afraid, make me a rarity, if not unique. (162)

Furthermore, all characters offer elliptic memories signaled by the past tense and the first person (these memories could be considered to be of the womb):

**M** I ran through the poppy field at the back of my  
grandfather's farm. When I burst in through the kitchen  
door I saw him sitting with my grandmother on his lap. He  
kissed her on the lips and caressed her breast. They looked  
around and saw me, smiling at my confusion. When I  
related this to my mother more than ten years later she  
stared at me oddly and said "That didn't happen to you. It  
happened to me. My father died before you were born.  
When that happened I was pregnant with you, but I didn't  
know it until the day of his funeral." (159)



Or inserting narratives using the past tense and the third personal pronoun. A possible Beckettian influence according to Antonia Rodríguez Gago.<sup>87</sup> As in:

**A** A small boy had an imaginary friend. He took her to the beach and they played in the sea. A man came from the water and took her away. The following morning the body of a girl was found washed up on the beach. (163)

**C** A handsome blond fourteen year old his thumbs hooked over his jeans half exposing his buttocks, his blue eyes full of the sun. (176)

These elliptic memories of *Crave's* quartet share with Beckett's characters their fragmentary identities as well as their increasing stasis and inevitable failures.

*Crave* contributes to our understanding and observation of life primarily because of the four voices and the poetic quality of the language, in the sense that this play is rich in associations:

**M** Absence sleeps between the buildings at night  
**C** Between the cars in the lay-by  
**B** Between the day and the night (189)  
**B** The woman with dragon eyes. (172)  
**C** Thick yellow blood, (177)  
**A** The scream of a daffodil,  
**M** The stain of a scream. (179)  
**A** Deliver my soul from the sword. (198)  
**A** A pale gold sea under a pale pink sky.  
**C** Red rock of ages (197)  
**C** Throbbing between shame and guilt. (181)

Thanks to associations, in these previous quotations, we can contemplate moments of ineffable transcendence. However, all interpretation can never lead to absolute truth or definitive conclusions in a poetic text like this.

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<sup>87</sup> Pointed out by Rodríguez Gago supervising a previous paper. Beckett, Pinter and Bond were the playwrights Kane most admired.

### 2.1.3.2 Intertextuality

Phyllis Nagy said in an interview that:

Sarah Kane has been described as a theatrical magpie in that you can find bits of Samuel Beckett, John Webster and Shakespeare in her work (Qtd. in Saunders, 154). However, she also added: I don't think that any truly talented writer sits down to write with such conscious references to other work in their heads. It would be impossible to write anything that wasn't hugely derivative of anything else. (Qtd. in Saunders, 154)

In this section we are going to see how the use of quotation in *Crave* helps to complete this verbal architecture. Kane gives us an ironic declaration of the play's intertextuality:

**C** I am an emotional plagiarist, stealing other's people's  
pain subsuming it into my own until. (195)

Eckart Voigts-Virchow provides us with a table to show the play's intertextuality, although in his own words "this list does not claim to be exhaustive" (Voigts-Virchow, 216):

	Manifest text ( <i>Crave</i> )	text
<i>Bible</i>	<b>C</b> He who comes after. (155)	John 1:15 and 27 John 19:36
	<b>B</b> I've never broken a bone in my body. (162)	Exodus 20:13
	<b>A</b> Thou shalt not kill thyself. (188)	Job 3:3
	<b>C</b> Let the day perish in which I was Let the blackness of the night terrify it	Job 3:5
	Let the stars of its dawn be dark	Job 3:9
	May it not see the eyelids of the mornig	

	<p>Because it did not shut the door of my mother's womb</p> <p>(189)</p> <p><b>A</b> Why is light given to one in misery (193)</p> <p><b>A</b> ...the mark of Cain.</p> <p>(195)</p> <p>A Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law... Love is the law, love under will...</p> <p>Satan, my lord, I am yours.</p> <p>(199)</p>	<p>Job 3:10</p> <p>Job 3:11</p> <p>And Lord put a mark on Cain, lest any who came upon him should kill him. (Genesis 4:15)</p> <p>Love is the fulfillment of the law ( Romans 13:10)</p> <p>Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.(Aleister Crowley)</p>
--	--	--

T.S. Eliot, <i>The Waste Land</i>	<p><b>M</b> HURRY UP PLEASE IT'S TIME</p> <p>(162)</p> <p><b>M</b> What's that got to do with anything?</p> <p>(163)</p> <p><b>A</b> Clutching a fistful of sand. (163)</p> <p><b>B</b> Everything.</p>	<p>1.141.154,165,168,169</p> <p>"On Margate Sands.</p>
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	<p>(Ibid)</p> <p><b>C</b> What's anything got to do with anything? (163)</p> <p><b>M</b> Control, control, relax and control (171)</p> <p><b>M</b> Choose, focus, apply. (174)</p> <p><b>M</b> Give, sympathise, control. (182)</p> <p><b>A</b> The shadow of my lie <b>C</b> Red Rock of Ages (193)</p> <p><b>A</b> Which passeth all understanding. (198)</p> <p><b>B</b> In den Bergen, da fühlst du dich frei. (196)</p>	<p>I can connect Nothing with nothing. (1.300-302)</p> <p>Datta, Dayadhvam.Damyata. (1.401 ff., 432, nt.: 401. Give, sympathise, control.)</p> <p>There is shadow under this red rock. (1.25)</p> <p>Shantih,shantih,shantih. (1.433,cf. Phillippians 4:7)</p> <p>In the mountains, there you feel free. (1.17,nt. 17)</p>
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	<p><b>C</b> Nothing to be done (182)</p> <p><b>C</b> (Emits a short one syllable scream) (182)</p> <p>She's talking about herself in the third person... (183)</p>	<p>(11)</p> <p>scream..[Screams]..then listen... <i>Not I</i> (378)</p> <p><i>Not I</i> (377)</p>
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<p>W.B Yeats</p>	<p><b>B</b> the centre will hold down ...But when your sense of centre shifts ...the balance my baby has gone. (192-193)</p>	<p>Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold. ( " The Second Coming 1.3)</p>
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<p>Joseph Conrad, <i>Heart of Darkness</i></p>	<p><b>A</b> My hollow heart is full of darkenss (174) I wake as I dream, (198)</p>	<p>We penetrated deeper and deeper into the heart of darkness. ( Conrad, 62 ) We live, as we dream – alone... (Conrad 50)</p>
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Throughout the text one finds oblique echoes of Crowley (as it has been discussed on page 293) or Division's suicidal lyrics of loss, self-disgust and violent depression. For example:

**M** I looked for you. All over the city. (156)

Division "To the centre of the city at night. Looking for you"  
(Curtis, 162)

In addition, Kane obliquely uses a suicidal cipher ("Wednesday's child is full of woe") found in the well-known nursery rhyme "Days of the week" she quotes in Spanish:

**B** Estás astravesada como el día Miércoles.<sup>88</sup> (194)  
("You are like a Wednesday.")

However "the overall stage experience in *Crave* is not necessarily that of an intertextual montage" (Voigts-Virchow, 213). The allusion and quotations of the referent text in the manifest text remain mainly internally marked. Again according to Voigts-Virchow (213) who draws on criteria developed by Jörg Helbing (91-128) one may state that:

1-Elliot or Beckett remain oblique because there is a little incongruence between the adopted and unadopted material.

2-There are no paratexts (titles, preface, inscriptions, dedications, footnotes, etc) to signal references (apart from minimalist stage directions and a section of translations appended to the plays text).

3-The reference to works such as the *Bible*, *Hamlet*, *the Waste Land*, or *Heart of Darkness* is made with a high transparency and currency, which shows a low awareness (in the threshold of her own creation) although she was conscious of her montage technique.

Summing up this chapter, first of all, what Kane does in *Crave* is to unmask emotions. These emotions are gathered through the discourse of anti-home and the discourse of love, embodied by four voices as an unfamiliar community of speakers. The linguistic tools employed to show these discourses are purposefully poetic. Kane uses intertextuality to help

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<sup>88</sup> The original text shows and "s," although it must be without s: *atravesada*.

to expand the emotions of this intoxicating quartet of voices, which harmonize like a lullaby at times, and then break off into a seductive pained soliloquy.

Near the end of the play, A "the polyglot" (Cohn, 46), speaks about language:

And don't forget that poetry is language for its own sake. (197).

It is very important to stress that the play's action consists of its language, which it is anti-linear, anti-final, static and achronological. Thus, *Crave*'s verbal architecture is offered as a poetic absorption, under an ambiguous language identified through abstraction, in order to show the essence of the reality in a deep silence. To achieve this silence the text becomes a poetic hypertext or in Gerard Lépinos's words, who develops the idea of *Crave* as a hypertext : "Il n'y a pas de sens, il y a à faire sens, jusqu'où on peut mais sans faire semblant. De même, il y a à faire théâtre. Ou vie." (Lépinos, 41). We have to read and reread every page, in order to get many of the connotations that this text evokes.

In the anti-home discourse, which *Crave* presents, everything is surrounded by the emptiness of the unnamed urban landscape, by the loneliness of the people isolated in this massive population:

A I am so lonely, so fucking lonely. (177)

M I crossed a river that runs in shadow. (196)

These voices seem unable to escape from this unnamed city as in Alfonso Costrafreda's poem :

Ciudad 1973

No he de salir de esta ciudad.

Aquí resonarán mis pasos  
como el péndulo de un reloj.

Tejer y destejer las manos y los brazos.  
Sigo un horario fijo. Oigo mi propia voz.

Maldigo este destino  
insignificante y atroz.

(67)



This setting of *Crave* is in fact a metaphor for an imaginary spiritual journey at the end of the play, which serves to express the technical precision made by Kane in the choice of a macro spatial location:

**B** 199714424

This quotation could be interpreted as the Hebrew letter *hei* in which means number 5 (each letter in the Hebrew Alphabet represents a number).<sup>89</sup> If we reduce the numbers said by B into only one figure:  $1+9+9+7+1+4+4+2+4 = 41 = 4+1$ , the result is number 5. This number in the Cabbala mysticism represents, among other things, window and knowledge, and the letter itself for this number means seed. Then the number and the letter represent the idea of openness through the window of knowledge, by means of the most elevated charity, as it is to give our seeds to others. Thus, with B's words expressed in this figure, Kane might be looking for a macro spatial location by means of a spiritual journey, but only at the end of the play where light is a symbol of an ultimate conquest of place, or space:

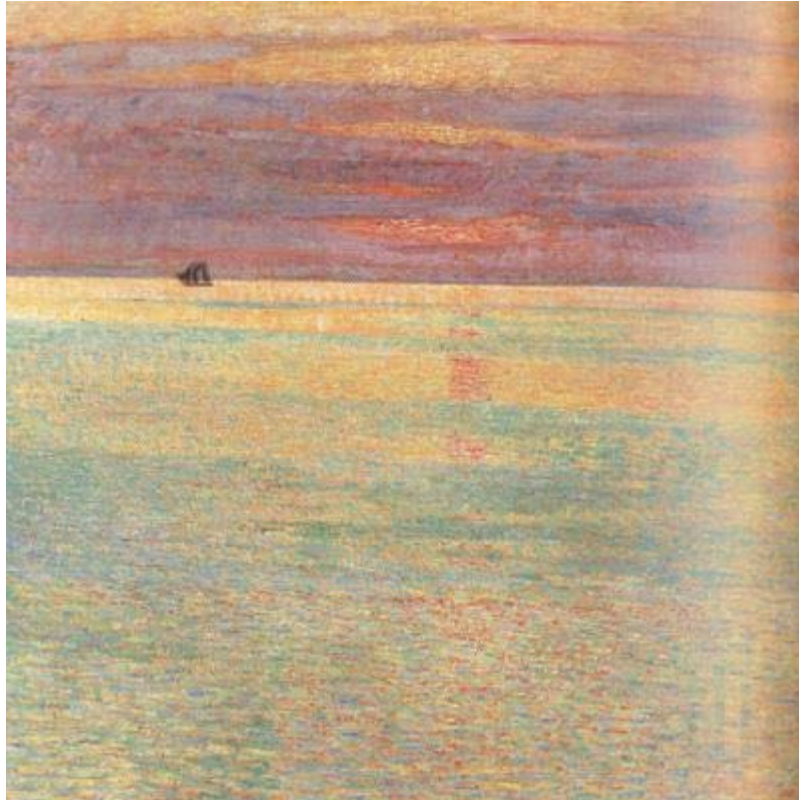
**B** Gaining light, (198)

**B** Into the light. (200)

As if the light were the voices dream to escape, to forget all cravings for love, a dream of a journey leading the spectator to emotional catharsis. However, there is no resolution in *Crave*. The language at the end becomes a chorus of four voices who seem to be embracing a benevolent light. Although the absence of love runs into death, it seems that the end of the play reaches a kind of serenity, a contentment as if it were a kind of cultural reference to Buddhism. Thus, this aesthetic end may be associated with the painting *Sunset at the Sea* (1911) by Childe Hassam where the extraordinary calm through the orange, blue and purple glow connects with mystical paths to understand what Buddhist philosophy suggests:

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<sup>89</sup> <http://e.wikipedia.org/wiki/kabbalah>



It is not clear whether Kane wished to transmit this Buddhist idea or not. What is clear is that in *Crave*, she tries to express the longing and suffering caused by the desire for love. In this sense, we can admit with Eduardo Cirlot:

Buda se equivocó. La causa del dolor no es el deseo, sino la carencia que motiva el deseo. Por la renunciación y el ascetismo se anticipa la muerte, pero no se resuelve el problema – los problemas de la vida. (321)

In the following part we will see how a line in *Crave* "My entire life is waiting to see the person with whom I am currently obsessed, starving the weeks away until our next fifteen-minute appointment"(184) seems to refer directly to part of the predicament explored in Kane's posthumous work, *4.48 Psychosis*, a first person exploration of emotions culminating in suicidal depression.

## **2.2 *Terra Incognita* under an Annihilating Light Surrounded by Words: 4.48 Psychosis**

Kind solace in a dying hour! (Poe, 14)

Her last play, *4.48 Psychosis* (1999/ Premiered in 2000) was reviewed by the majority of British theatre critics as something more than a dramatic suicide note. In fact, this play reveals the poetic style and the emotional power of Kane's originality.

*4.48 Psychosis* can be explored by means of a fluctuation between the intensely personal and the powerfully abstract. The structure of the play is this series of disconnected meditations through unnamed and fragmented voices, presenting these series of disconnected meditations on the themes of abuse, betrayal, love and depression, through landscapes made entirely out of language and images.

The aim of this chapter is to provide an insight into Kane's last work exploring dramatic language from two different angles:

-1st) language in a theatrical landscape and

-2nd) language as a dramatic prose poem, in the hope that this analysis will illuminate some of the core themes and as a result contribute to our understanding of the play.

Before exploring these issues, I would like to provide an explanation of the chosen title for this section of work: "*Terra incognita* under an Annihilating Light Surrounded by Words: *4.48 Psychosis*," using the following table, which is divided into three parts. This table allows us to understand the content of the play and the subject of study in this chapter.

A-	B-	C-
<p>TERRA INCOGNITA →</p> <p>A descent into the subterranean vaults of the mind.</p>	<p>AN ANNIHILATING LIGHT →</p> <p>The state of depression.</p> <p>No light = death.</p> <p>Picasso's <i>Guernica</i> (1937). Bacon's <i>Two figures</i> (1953)</p>	<p>SURROUNDED BY WORDS →</p> <p>Through the myriad of unidentified and unnumbered voices.</p> <p>LANG-SCAPE</p>

A. TERRA INCOGNITA: as a descent into the subterranean vaults of the mind. A vault can be defined "a cellar" which means a place not visited frequently. This is connected with the theme of the play, as it is depression, we do not know when one is going to suffer depression, when it is going to appear, and for that reason depression is seen as a "*terra incognita*."

B. AN ANNIHILATING LIGHT: "to annihilate" is to destroy completely. It is the state of depression in the sense that, after an annihilating light comes destruction, no light, which implies death. Death is surrounded narrowly by a depression. A similar annihilating light can be seen in Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* (1937). This blinding light is shown in the following quotation from *4.48 Psychosis*, and also appears in Picasso's and Bacon's paintings, which I show below:

(...) near the ceiling of a mind whose floor shifts as ten  
thousand cockroaches when a shaft of light enters as all  
thoughts unite in an instant of accord body... (205)

The steps of a depression are represented by the use of the black, white and grey images.



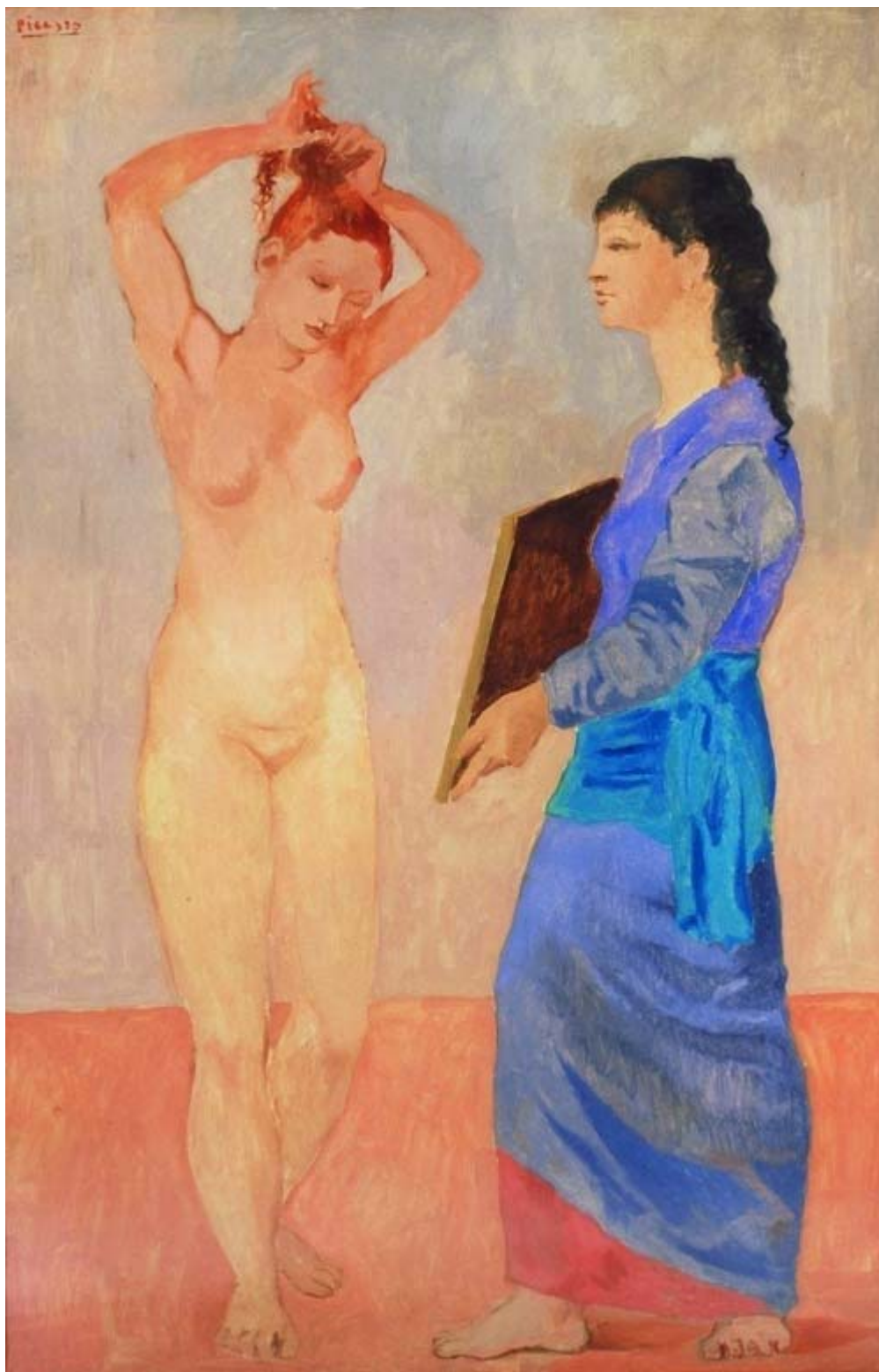
In Picasso's *Guernica*, one also sees black, white and grey tonalities and the annihilating light symbolises war. In this painting death is associated with war, as well as darkness and suffering.

Francis Bacon, *Two figures*, 1953, also in black, white and grey tonalities, gives the effect of an annihilating impact. It was Bacon's wish to represent this tormented and difficult

relationship with Peter Lacy. In this painting, the search for love is presented as animal abasement under an annihilating light to express the inner states of the male relationship:



In a sharp contrast to these two paintings, a shining light, as can be seen in *The toilette* (1906) by Picasso representing life, or a call to life, to pleasure:



However, Kane's shares the kind of annihilating light of *Guernica* and *Two figures*, not this particular one.

The following explanation refers to the final division of the table.

C. SURROUNDED BY WORDS: This is a play about different voices coming together. The physical actions of what people are doing to each other does not need to be shown, perhaps because Kane's oral images are so visual. "Lang-scape" (Fuchs and Chaudhuri, 147): a term which implies the centrality of language in *4.48 Psychosis*, and is the subject of discussion in the first part of this chapter.

### 2.2.1 Lang-scape

It was Gertrude Stein who voiced that "plays are landscapes" (Fuchs and Chaudhuri, 11). When Stein calls her plays landscapes she is drawing on an analogy to a genre of art - the landscape painting. In imagining her plays in this way, Stein was able to free herself from dramatic conventions and was able to experiment with new forms that had their source in contemporary painting, not dramatic literature. Thus, establishing an analogy between the title: "Terra incognita under an annihilating light surrounded by words" and *4.48 Psychosis*, we can liberate this play, following Stein's pattern, from the restrictions of literary genre conventions, because Kane's *4.48 Psychosis* is structured as a "collage" of different discourses, using dramatic language to express the boundaries between reality, fantasy, presenting different mental states. The following quotation can illustrate the point:

Come now, let us reason together  
Sanity is found in the mountain of the Lord's house on the  
horizon of the soul that eternally recedes  
The head is sick, the heart's caul torn  
Tread the ground on which wisdom walks  
Embrace beautiful lies –  
the chronic insanity of the sane  
the wrenching begins. (229)

This attempt to express the boundaries between reality, fantasy and different mental states is a "*terra incognita*," because these boundaries are something unknown. Moreover, the annihilating light, which, as has been said, is a state of depression, inevitably falls into blackness, because sombre tonalities best represent the states of a depressive mind. These



dark tonalities do not please the eye, nor give sensual pleasure, as mentioned above in the examples of Picasso's *Guernica* or Bacon's *Two figures*. Again by contrast, in Johannes Vermeer's *Girl with a Pearl Earring* (1660), the light is a pleasure to the eye and awakes sensuality:



There are two views, which are associated with the use of the term landscape in drama: - landscape as environment and landscape as discourse –. Landscape as environment is an empirical reality, a world that is actually "out there," whereas landscape as discourse is always a representation, an image, an idea, a conceptualisation or a fantasy about what is out



there. The long title of this chapter "Terra incognita under an annihilating light surrounded by words: *4.48 Psychosis* " aims to connect landscape with discourse.

In *4.48 Psychosis*, there is a close relationship between the psyche and a dramatic landscape created through language. It is Jane Palatini Bowers who suggests a more accurate neologism for such a relationship, using the term "lang-scape" (Fuchs and Chaudhuri, 11). In this way, lang-scapes are landscapes created for the ear and the imagination, whereas the detailed physical landscapes of naturalism were created for the eye. Kane has abandoned the specific and detailed physical settings that suited so well the age of naturalism and in its place she has developed new forms of stage geography, reflecting everything around us is in fact a product of language, in her case of dramatic language.

One might reasonably expect that a play as a landscape would use language sparingly, but on consideration of Kane's *4.48 Psychosis*, we perceive the air of the theatre in which this play is produced, a malleable opacity of words, filling the ear, as in print they fill the eye, because in fact what we perceive are landscapes made entirely out of language:

the broken hermaphrodite who trusted herself alone finds the  
room in reality teeming and begs never to wake from the  
nightmare

and they were all there

every last one of them

and they knew my name

as I scuttled like a beetle along the backs of their chairs.

(205-206).

Here Kane places us in front of a kafkaesque room, where the "I" could be metamorphosed into a beetle known by all there (and they knew my name, 205) as a broken hermaphrodite. This broken hermaphrodite fills the air, the space in our ear, and presents a fantasy, a landscape made out of words.

*4.48 Psychosis* is a lang-scape in the sense that it shows her audience a new kind of theatre, initiated already by Stein and by Beckett, where language plays a central role. In this lang-scape Kane releases language from the requirement that it should tell a story, or create psychologically believable characters, or convey sequential thinking. She uses words just as a painter uses colours in a painting, as if these words were related to each other

spatially, that is, visually on the page and sonorously in the air. The following examples can serve to prove this visuality on the page and this sonority in the air:

-----

	100			
				91
		84		
				81
	72			
		69		
			58	
	44			
	1. 38			
	42			
1	28			
		12	7	
				(208)

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100
93
86
79
72
65
58
51
44

37  
30  
23  
16  
9  
2

(232)

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These series of numbers transport us to a variety of locations. However, they could also be interpreted as a kaleidoscope of ages or what psychiatric nurses give patients to asses their level of concentration.

Due to the fact that Kane is a dramatic writer concerned with both words and images, she has taken this preoccupation with language in a particular theatrical direction, using language as a spatial as well as a linear construct. Here is an other example, among many others, to show this linear and spatial construct:

How do I stop?

How do I stop?

How do I stop?

How do I stop?

How do I stop?

A tab of pain

How do I stop?

Stabbing my lungs

How do I stop?

A tab of death

How do I stop?

Squeezing my heart

I'll die

not yet

but it's there

Please...

Money...

Wife ... (226).

Kane shares with Stein and Beckett their indifference to traditional plots, characters and dramatic development. They replace these concepts with the exploration of structures, sounds, repetitions and the evocative possibilities of language itself. Thus, language becomes a landscape with a variety of ways, which extend the possibilities of the neologism "lang-scape" to represent the artist's imaginative power. Consequently, the adoption of this coinage "lang-scape" suggests the centrality of language within the landscape of the theatre .

The analytic cubists maintained that the semiological limits of painting do not coincide with the representation of the visible world. Kane does the same for the semiology of writing and the representation of the spoken world:

True Right Correct

Anyone or anybody

Each every all

drowning in a sea of logic

this monstrous state of palsy

still ill. (223)

By means of an analysis of this example, we can see that what emerges is the desire to show the limits of the visible world through a profound original writing, presenting time the limits of language at the same. For that reason Kane's concerns with exploration of

structures and the evocative possibilities of language itself have become a landscape with a variety of ways, which extend the possibilities of the "lang-scape" (neologism).

In *4.48 Psychosis*, Kane offers psychic projections of the central figure in the form of strange visual terrains – landscapes of the soul – or as it is described in the chosen title – terra incognita- echoing the truth of a psychic state. At the same time, the play relates language and landscape, presented to the audience's imagination through images and voices. What is more, through language she claims a landscape quite different from what our eyes perceive; her psychic and symbolic landscapes are essential linguistic creations. Creations as a mercurial or changeable monologue with a volatile volcano inside, through a great number of unknown voices. This erratic volcano is, in fact, a location for the representation of a geography generated by language in this terra incognita, which is the landscape of a depressive human mind or psyche.

In this vision of landscapes as linguistic creations, many sections of *4.48 Psychosis* may be related to Stéphane Mallarmé's symbolic poetry, where words are used to seek musicality, or suggestive power, or evocations of multivoiced scenes. Mallarmé also sought to make drama reflect a mental or spiritual life rather than the crude world of the senses:

#### ANGOISSE

Je ne viens pa ce soir vaincre ton corps, ô bête

En qui vont les péches d'un peuple, ni creuser

Dans tes cheveux impurs une triste tempête

Sous l'incurable ennui que verse mon baiser: (...)

(Mallarmé,42)

One more example by Mallarmé:

(...)

veillant

doutant

roulant

brillant et méditant

avant de s'arrêter  
à quelque point dernier qui le sacre

Toute Pensée émet un Coup de Dés.<sup>90</sup>

In the following quotation from *4.48 Psychosis*, words are used to seek a suggestive power and can be interpreted as "a kind of prayer"<sup>91</sup> full of striking black images:

Fuck you. Fuck you. Fuck you for rejecting me by never  
being here, fuck you for making me feel shit about myself,  
fuck you for bleeding the fucking love and life out of me,  
fuck my father for fucking up my life for good and fuck my  
mother for not leaving him, but most of all, fuck you God  
for making me love a person who does not exist,  
FUCK YOU FUCK YOU FUCK YOU. (215)

Kane in this kind of linguistic repetitive exuberance of taboo words, framed in the form of an experimental prayer, where disaster or inequilibrium lead to a toxic landscape, seems to say that the spatial arrangements of words or phonemes play a central role in the imaginative world of the play, totally different from what our eyes see or our ears hear, because Kane creates this play as a performance poem. It is not drama in the shape of poetry, but poetry in the shape of drama and our imaginative world has to be more spacious than before, watching this play. Once again, these verbal evocations make a more innovative use of language, creating a dramatic landscape.

The "lang-scape" of *4.48 Psychosis* suggests questions such as "How many characters are there?" "How many actions are performed?" "How much of it is finished?" However, such questions about its nature as a whole cannot be answered because it is a

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<sup>90</sup> This quotation is from Mallarmé's poem "Une constellation" and appears in this version without page number.

<sup>91</sup> Rodríguez Gago suggested this idea of "a kind of prayer" during a doctoral course on 18<sup>th</sup> February, 2004.

work in progress, as if it were a building under construction that will eventually be completed. However, in relation to the number of characters, it should be maintained that this play is about voices in someone's head coming together in a chorus, transformed into a single voice. One example, among others:

(...) near the ceiling of a mind whose floor shifts as ten  
thousand cockroaches when a shaft of light enters as all  
thoughts unite in an instant of accord body (...) (205)

the morning brings defeats.

(231)

Remember the light and believe the light.

Nothing matters more.

Stop judging by appearances and make a right judgement

(229)

In realistic theatre the imaginative power and control of its creators, be they playwrights, directors, or actors, tend to focus on the visible. Kane decides to violate this convention, as Stein did before her, by exploring the fallacy of realistic theatre to show that all plays, like all landscapes, are the fictional product of artists, presenting something that does not really exist, something that is different from reality, and is merely illusion. Therefore, in order to present that illusion, Kane preferred the physical language of the stage rather than other materials, such as wood, paint, iron...etc. She preferred the physical language of the stage to present her inner world. Her imaginative power, her creative product and her efforts are visible and determine the geography of the play.

In her last plays Kane created new landscapes of the mind, liberating the human imagination to construct its own universe, finding strange equivalences between topography and psyche. This penetration takes the form of a dangerous descent into the innermost landscapes of spiritual awareness: this treacherous descent into the subterranean vaults of the mind is the landscape of a terra incognita through the myriad of unidentified and

unnumbered voices, which form 4.48 *Psychosis*. The following examples express very clearly this illusory descent into the underground arched roofs of the mind:

I have no desire for death

no suicide ever had

watch me vanish

watch me

vanish

watch me

watch me

watch. (244)

It is myself I have never met, whose face is pasted  
on the underside of my mind . (245)

This last quotation is very illuminating because this play is a gallery of broken subjectivities, which never meet, where the underside of the mind space visualizes depression as something different, distinguishable from those other sufferings.

It is interesting to see how Kane uses time in this play. There are many references to time such as:

After 4.48 I shall not speak again. (213)



At 4.48

When sanity visits

for one hour and twelve minutes I am in my right mind.

when it has passed I shall be gone again,

a fragmented puppet, a grotesque fool.

Now I am here I can see myself

but when I am charmed by vile delusions of happiness

the foul magic of this engine of sorcery,

I cannot such touch my essential self.

Why do you believe me then and not now ?

(229)

This implies a space of ecstasy, where time returns to space through language and allows this voice to wander in time as if it were space searching for self-hood. This idea of spatiality searching for identity, this ecstasy of a voice wandering in time and searching for self-hood can also be seen in the sentences of section 22, for example:

(...)

to defend myself

to defend my psychological space

to vindicate the ego

to receive attention

to be seen and heard

(233-234)

This play comes into being as a series of perspectives. Its whole is not experienced as a unit but as an accumulation of multiple engagements of the listening self-hood with the spoken voices. What Kane does is to juxtapose many perspectives of the same concept, as

Picasso and Braque did in painting, in order to create an awareness of the limits of every perspective, the desirability of moving from one perspective to another and, finally, of understanding many perspectives simultaneously. For example, the linguistic forms employed range from prose poem monologues, doctor-patient conversations, and medical language questions. In the following example, one can see that, like in Picasso's or Bracque's cubist landscapes, nothing seems to be in agreement:

the sword in my dreams  
the dust of my thoughts  
the sickness that breeds in the folds of my mind.  
(213)

Symptoms: No eating, not sleeping, not speaking, no sex

Drive, in despair, wants to die.

Diagnosis: Pathological grief. (223)

The truth of the play is perhaps that one has to face depression in one's life, and in the lives of others, depression that holds tightly on to us. People, in a state of depression feel that they are watching their own drama unfold, as Kane herself reveals in the following words:

love keeps me a slave in a cage of tears  
I gnaw my tongue with which to her I can never speak  
I miss a woman who was never born  
I kiss a woman across the years that say we shall never meet

Everything passes  
Everything perishes  
Everything palls

my thought walks away with a killing smile  
living discordant anxiety  
which roars in my soul

No hope No hope No hope No hope No hope No hope No hope.

(218)

Therefore, we can see how this play shows, among other things, strong emotions expressed through a stark framework of language with mysteries and meaning inhabiting the silence and darkness of the mind. A descent into a nocturnal labyrinth, into the spectral state of depression:

I write for the dead  
the unborn

(213)

and especially, when she says:

I beg you to save me from this madness that eats me  
a sub-intentional death.

(226)

It is as if Kane gives depression its own geography and topography. She assigns an appropriate climate to the depressive states of the psyche through her lang-scape, and through her poetic words Kane leads us to the gate of a common truth, - as a great number of people suffer from depression at some point in their lives -. A great number of people suffer a psychotic breakdown where the barriers between reality and different forms of imagination completely disappear. Thanks to Kane's ability to communicate emotions and ideas, one can be Icarus seeing the landscape from the air, although one can at the same time be equally doomed to crash. She creates landscapes clearly different from what our

eyes see because we perceive a lang-scape through the eyes of our minds, through the eyes of our souls.

As a final word, to conclude this section about Kane's lang-scapes in *4.48 Psychosis*, I will turn to a quotation by Greig, which serves as a summary for this discussion on landscapes:

Kane mapped the darkest and most unforgiving internal landscapes: landscapes of violation, loneliness, power, mental collapse and most consistently the landscapes of love.

(Quoted in Saunders, 118)

### 2.2.2 Dramatic Prose Poem

The great number of unidentified voices, which form *4.48 Psychosis*, are used, as it has been previously stated, as a way of making language attempt to express the boundaries between reality, fantasy and different mental states. For this reason Kane writes with clear precision, with enough cold blood inspired in the chaotic world she is presenting, with the determination to create plays in the form of dramatic prose poems. Since hers is an experiential theatre, her words do not have the purpose to hide truths. The relationship between language and dramatic situation is not a relationship merely based on memory and knowledge but on experience.

Language in this play assumes a materiality equal in presence to the materiality of the other elements of performance, due to the fact that the limits between poetry and prose become permeable, and thus provide Kane with an opportunity to synthesize something that transcends the frontiers implicit in a reality that she did not like. This hybridism between poetry and prose consciously confers on her prose the category of poetry, abandoning the voice of rhetorical poetry and adapting the flexibility of the rhythmic cadence. For example, in the following lines from the play, we can see that the content is somehow subterranean because of the images and ambiguity typical of prose poems:

horror in repose

I can feel my space

fill my time

but nothing can fill this void in my heart

The vital need for which I would die

Breakdown

(219)

Poetic language and visual images are the building blocks of this play but all these images are contained within language rather than visualised physically on stage. On stage we see only one character talking or listening to off-stage voices, in an effort to express the difference between waking life and dream life, or as an attempt to express the limits between reality, fantasy and different mental states, and if possible, to transcend them in order to change a reality this protagonist does not like:

This is not a world in which I wish to live . (210)

In this microcosm of feelings and of different mental states, expressed by language and sound images, Kane, like Macpherson and his imaginary Ossian, shows that poetry can appear in prose, and thanks to this, she can break away from the literal and direct significance of words in order to create special poetic meanings and extraordinary dramatic effects. One example:

Christ is dead

And the monks are in ecstasy

We are the abjects

who depose our leaders

and burn incense unto Baal. (229)

Therefore, her language becomes poetic by virtue of its rhythms, margins of silence and the audience's alertness to give intense attention to the connotations of words. These connotations especially evoke the fragility and brevity of human life, the fact that we are mortal and live in a very short space of time.

With the scars of depression on her own body and in her own mind, Kane writes this poetic play, but as said previously, it is not a suicide note, it is a poetic play where very little is explained, as Nils Tahert comments:

Things just happen and you have to make up your own mind what it means, like in poems.

(Saunders, 137)

This prose poem assumes multiple registers from tragic to tender and also comic, but all of them are permeated by a tone of desperation, a howl of pain, which becomes an act of artistic heroism, unlike Whitman's expression of a transcendental ego. In Kane's plays, this artistic heroism is an autonomous and very individualistic model of subjectivity.

4.48 *Psychosis* is an experiential play full of metaphors of suffering, loss and need in a time of madness, written as an expression of emotions, of what happens to a person's mind in this purgatorial situation. Some examples illustrate this:

Metaphors of suffering:

love keeps me a slave in a cage of tears (218)

and a wound from two years ago opens like a cadaver ( 209)

My life is caught in a web of reason (233)

Metaphor of loss:

All I know

is snow

and black despair (241)

Here Kane deals with the reality of life through words that articulate all the bitterness and degradation people suffer before and after a suicide attempt. Additionally, it also appears that after an attempt to commit suicide, people become more connected to themselves than most "normal" people are and for this reason, after such an attempt, to commit suicide writing is deeply related to the experience of being. Thus, Kane creates a poetic self, which is made visible, especially in this play. Antonio Colinas suggests referring to the "fact of poets" "es un modo de ser y estar en el mundo" (Colinas, 14). In this way, Kane makes a radical bet in her theatre for words, and in her last two plays, she creates prose poems as a means of presenting a personal reality, which she did not like. Her dislike about what life represents for her protagonist can be illustrated in the following excerpt:

the only thing that's permanent is destruction  
we're all going to disappear  
trying to leave a mark more permanent than myself (241)

Here, in the following lines, in the form of a poem, we can realize her emotional intensity as well as a certain degree of formal poetic economy. The importance of love is a central theme in all Kane's plays:

Cut out my tongue  
tear out my hair  
cut off my limbs  
but leave me my love  
I would rather have lost my legs  
pulled out my teeth  
gouged out my eyes  
than lost my love (230)

This poem presents a miniature universe, an instant message that shakes us profoundly thanks to her poetic language, where the music of the words does not consist of the euphony of vowels and consonants, but of the relationship between the meaning and sound of words, because poetry has the power to manifest this relation whether as pleasure or as paradox and no other kind of writing shows words up to the light as poetry does. Poetic language can be distinguished from prose because it has both a glow and an intensity intended to perturb and to move us.

Kane as a dramatic poet expresses an amazing summary of feelings, with few words of reflections and of knowledge. Her plays condense feelings, reflections and knowledge with intensity and flexibility. *4.48 Psychosis* can be considered as a prose poem because Kane, with economic means reveals that the movement in search of hope and self-hood is extremely desperate and no other language except poetry, in her case dramatic poetry, can serve to express this search.

Rhythm is also one of the main aspects that characterises a prose poem. Without rhythm, without music, a poem is simple prose. In this play a regular succession of weak and strong stresses, accents, sounds and movement are clearly visible, and these lead us to the specific rhythm inherent in this dramatic prose poem. In the lines "Cut out my tongue ..."  
(231) we can clearly see this regular succession of weak and strong stresses, sounds and movement that guide us to the specific rhythm of the poetry of this play.

In this dance of words, which is *4.48 Psychosis*, alliteration also plays an important part. "Alliteration is perhaps one of the oldest uses of sound in poetry, as it was used to anchor the sound of Anglo-Saxon poetry" (Jeffriers, 40). It is mainly seen as part of harmony in poetry. In this play, there are many examples:

Find me

Free me

from this

(219)

unpleasant

unacceptable

uninspiring



...

irrelevant

irreverent

irreligious

... <sup>92</sup>

(221)

With the decline in metre and rhyme, other sound effects emerge, such as sound-symbolism. Kane constantly makes use of this effect in her prose poems: "as I scuttled like a beetle along the backs of their chairs" (206). The word "scuttled" conventionally refers to the movement of small mammals and additionally connotes the sound of their nails on the floor. Here the sound of the beetle's legs is shared by the movement of the "I" in a wish to compare the action of the "I" with "a beetle." It has also an onomatopoeic effect, which may be described "as a special sub-type of sound-symbolism" (Jeffriers, 55).

Although it is conventionally associated with animal and inanimate noises, poets may create onomatopoeic effects, which work only in context. Kane uses onomatopoeia in unusual and effective ways, creating a contextual onomatopoeia by exploring auditory aspects of individual sounds and groups of sounds. For example:

...    ...    ....    .....    and a  
long buried shame roars<sup>93</sup> its foul decaying grief.    (209)

The overall effect of "roars" has an enormous strength in this landscape of despair and depression.

The next group of sounds is also used to build up a sound-symbolic effect:

wring slash punch slash float flicker flash punch

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<sup>92</sup> The emphasis is mine.

<sup>93</sup> The emphasis is mine.

wring dab flicker punch slash press flash press  
dab flicker wring burn flicker dab flash dab float  
burn press burn flash flicker slash

beautiful pain  
that says I exist

flicker punch slash dab wring press burn slash  
press slash punch flash press burn slash  
dab flicker float flicker dab press burn slash  
press slash punch flash flicker burn. (232)

The sentence "beautiful pain that says I exist" is between two columns of words whose sounds represent a picture of torture, in which the fricative consonants of the verbs "float, flicker, flash" represent a soft movement to make suffering less vexatious.

This visual prose poem is characterised by transparency and simplicity. Although sometimes we can find figures of speech such as oxymoron.<sup>94</sup> for example in the line "touching her absence" (218). As a result, the general characteristic is the total absence of unnecessary elaboration, achieving a crystalline austerity of words throughout the whole play, as Kane herself said but in this case referring to *Cleansed* although it can be applied to this play:

I wanted to strip everything down;  
I wanted to be as poetic as possible;  
and I didn't want to waste any words.

(Sierz, 116)

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<sup>94</sup> "A historical figure in which an epigrammatic effect is created by the conjunction of incongruous or contradictory terms" OXYMORONS: acute dullness ...  
[www.oxymorons.com/oxymorons.html](http://www.oxymorons.com/oxymorons.html)

Kane's poetic language is in essence a movement towards silence in order to get at some hidden truth that prose works perhaps cannot express.

*4.48 Psychosis* as a play presents a landscape of the mind, a cry of despair, showing the fragility of human life, its text is a bundle of different meanings that coexist and cannot be summarised into a unique message. However, we can in a hazardous exercise interpret the different sections of *4.48 Psychosis*. Thus, the first section is rich in associations of friendship under the constant menace of failure. Here language becomes poetic by virtue of its rhythms and long silences, Kane creates the image of an unidentified person in a complex, bitter, and arid world, whose end seems to be irremediably solitary. Although caught in a system of human relations, this same system is questionable for any individual, even when he/she has many friends: "you have a lot of friends" (205).

In three questions of this section, Kane uses the verb "offer":

What do you offer your friends to make them so  
supportive?

(*A long silence* )

What do you offer your friends to make them so  
supportive?

( *A long silence* )

What do you offer?<sup>95</sup> (205)

She uses this verb to directly refer to offering instead of receiving, an action that is necessary to maintain friendship. Equally the use of the adjective "supportive," which appears three times, means the transition from a narrow focus to a wider one, the narrow focus is the human tendency towards selfishness. The transition has a connotation of doubt towards a wide focus where the adjective "supportive" articulates a kind of bitterness, as it is included into a question. Reading this section, we can see how Kane is a brilliant writer

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<sup>95</sup> Again my emphasis on these words.

whose words and silences, are related to the failure of individuals to transcend their separate spheres, and become complementary in a comprehensive and mutually nourishing unity, as might be friendship.

In the second section, the sentence "I have a night in which everything was revealed to me" (205) is particularly interesting. It is the kind of sentence found frequently in the literature of mysticism to describe moments of ineffable transcendence "I John saw these things and heard them" (Rev, 22:8).<sup>96</sup>

These two sentences mean that, however fantastic "these things" may seem to be, they are actually true and the terrific darkness of a night in which things are revealed, it will perhaps lead to the light of knowledge. Darkness usually related to the un-known can be as source of inspiration, as in Beckett.<sup>97</sup>

In Kane, light and darkness are always related:

Remember the light and believe the light

An instant of clarity before eternal night (206).

This example suggests that knowledge is able to look directly into the inner essence of light, and of darkness. Therefore, Kane asks her audience to look into light and darkness, into words and silence, and to fuse sight and hearing synaesthetically, revealing thus the separability between "Being" and "Nothingness." The immediate experience comes before the consciousness of knowing, which is shown in a conscious instant reflected in Kane's experiential theatre.

Section three presents a symbol of death-in-life and life-in-death, or gives an example of prolonged depression in an autonomous and individualistic model of subjectivity. With the use of the pronoun "I" (33 times), she contemplates the destinies of many men and women, in different times and places, under depression. In this dramatic monologue, she dramatises the experience of depression in a lyrical way, the intensity of her language outlines the psychic

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<sup>96</sup> Quoted in Eliot, 89.

<sup>97</sup> This reference to Beckett was suggested to me by Rodríguez Gago.

processes of a depressive mind. These psychic processes show an inversion of Lacan's well-known theory of the "mirror-phase":

the crucial moment of acquired identity which occurs when a baby (at the age of six months or so) assumes his specular image in the mirror - a recognition of self – that is accompanied by immense pleasure. (quoted in Miefiori, 300)

However, in this play pleasure changes into pain, when in front of a mirror:

I am fat

...

My lips are too big

I dislike my genitals (207)

Poetic echoes are many in this play. It is as if the whole play were an evocation of Emily Dickinson's poem "Let down the Bars, Oh Death":

Let down the Bars, Oh Death

The tired Flocks come in

Whose bleating ceases to repeat

Whose wandering is done –

Thine is the stillest night

Thine the securest Fold

Too nearer Thou art for seeking Thee

Too tender, to be told. (118)

As it has been previously stated, the play is more than a suicide note, however, there exists a parallelism with accursed or "maudites" poets, (who also committed suicide) in the sense that it presents an inner rupture of a great sensitiveness. Not only Sylvia Plath, as we will see later, but also recent young Spanish poets, unfortunately dead, have a parallelism with Kane. To illustrate this, a poem by Chusé Izmel (when he died he was 24 years old) can serve to give light to this inner rupture, which Kane presents in *4.48 Psychosis*. I quote Izmel:

Tengo 24 años

TENGO veinticuatro años y  
soy un anciano que agoniza,  
que se arrastra en su propia  
saliva, que se tropieza con sus pies,  
que busca la salida última,  
que tiene pánico en su mismo nombre.

(*La Alegría de los Naufragios*, 95)<sup>98</sup>

The following quote from Kane contains similar ideas:

I just hope to God that death is the fucking end. I feel  
like I'm eighty years old. I'm tired of life and my  
mind wants to die. (211)

Like Sylvia Plath in "Edge," Kane makes in *4.48 Psychosis* a solemn declaration of life rather than a desperate suicidal note. Thus, in Plath:

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<sup>98</sup> The Spanish writer Jesús Ferrero suggested this poem for the magazine *La alegría de los naufragios* but he did not give the date of the poem.

The woman is perfected.

Her dead

Body wears the smile of accomplishment,

The illusion of a Greek necessity (my emphasis)

(Plath, e.p.)<sup>99</sup>

This "Greek necessity" becomes in Kane a "vital need":

I know no sin

this is the sickness of becoming great

this vital need for which I would die

to be loved

(242-243)

Both necessities evoke an affirmation to live, although these necessities are not the same in these quoted poems. Notwithstanding, both writers are aware of the final edge that crosses this life:-death- and both needed "to be loved," but felt they were not loved. In this sense Plath and Kane share with Stevie Smith their concern with death, although in Smith's poems is not a really gloomy concern, and death is something to be comfortably welcomed, like a neighbour:

Come, Death (ii)

I feel ill. What can the matter be?

I'd ask God to have pity on me,

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<sup>99</sup> e.p: electronic page, internet source.

But I turn to the one I know, and say:

Come, Death, and carry me away.

Ah me, sweet Death, you are the only god

Who comes as a servant when he is called, you know,

Listen then to this sound I make, it is sharp,

Come Death. Do not be slow.

(184)<sup>100</sup>

As a conclusion, we can say that Kane's play *4.48 Psychosis* from beginning to end is an artistic journey into the depths of the psyche. Her dramatic prose poem, although extremely desperate is a movement in search of hope, which provides a great metaphorical impact.

As it has been stated in the introduction of this research, Kane's *In-Yer-Face theatre* wants audiences to be disturbed by the extreme emotions that are shown on stage, and in *4.48 Psychosis*, such emotions are manifested through the voices of victim, perpetrator and bystander, embodied in a simple character that perturbs our emotions. Yet what emerges is the profound originality of her writing, and her intention to show the limits of language, as James Joyce did in his unreadable novel: *Finnegans Wake*, or as the analytic cubists (shown on p. 81) demonstrated once and for all, that the semiological limits of painting do not coincide with the representation of the visible world. Kane does the same mapping of a dark landscape, or a sound lang-scape of mental collapse.

All the syntactic and semantic choices she makes are perfectly suited to what she tries to say, weaving into different threads her own individuality and experience, giving form to a discourse expressed by means of a dramatic poetic language. At the same time, the materialistic and immoral values of our aggressive, violent society are presented on stage through its protagonist's discourse:

I gassed the Jews, I killed the Kurds, I bombed the  
Arabs, I fucked small children while they begged for

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<sup>100</sup> Lee, Hermione (Ed.)



She perhaps wishes to confront us with a society that needs a revision, forcing us to give an answer to this lack of moral values. Staging intense human pain, Kane's words are filled with moral truths, which are also "slogans" of unknown dreamers of solidarity, who, paradoxically, as herself, live in circles of solitude, enduring the suffering of living:

I feel your pain but I cannot hold your life in my  
hands. (4.48 *Psychosis*, 237)

### 2.2.3 Conclusion of These Poetic Parts

I have reached the end of this dreary and repugnant  
tale of a sense interned in an alien carcass and  
lumpen by the malignant spirit of the moral majority.  
(4.48 *Psychosis*, 214)

In this part of the research, I have sought to focus my analysis on Kane's dramatic language in both *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis*. I have analysed forms of discourse such as – an anti-home discourse and a discourse of love – and the discourse architecture with its poetic qualities in *Crave*. I have analysed the term "landscape" in *4.48 Psychosis* and this play as a prose poem. Since these two plays are considered by critics as "linguistic," I hope to have demonstrated convincingly in this chapter that my exploration of Kane's use of language, in both *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis*, has served to discover the linguistic aspects of these two *terrae incognitae*. According to Kenyon, "Sarah was a theatre animal" (Saunders, 145) and she herself said about all her plays in her last letter: "These are not museum pieces. I want these plays performed" (Ibid., 145). Therefore, I have wanted to touch upon some of the aspects of Kane's legacy focusing on her last two plays. By this, I mean those features of her drama, which mark out, from my point of view, her importance as a playwright. My arguments have been supported by critics, but it is important to highlight that there is not much criticism on Kane in book format. There are many articles (articles referred not only to *Crave* or *4.48 Psychosis* but also to *Blasted*, *Cleansed* and *Phaedra's Love*.), and I have used these articles as the base for my research.

Critics, such as Nightingale, state that the schism, which exists between Kane's work and much of the drama of other contemporaries, is: "her handling of image and metaphor which set her apart from almost every other playwright of her generation" (quoted in Saunders: 2002, 126). In this sense, one of the most important aspects in *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis* is that Kane liberates language from banality and returns to poetic dramatic speech.

As we have seen dramatic language in *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis* can be explored by means of a fluctuation between the intensely personal and the powerfully abstract. These series of disconnected meditations (in *Crave* through four named voices: A, M, B, C, and in *4.48 Psychosis* through unnumbered and unnamed voices) follow a criterion of constant fragmentation and reassembly to avoid the conventional expectations concerning unity and coherence of plot and character. Nevertheless, behind these series of disconnected meditations, a perfect vivid dissection of abuse, betrayal, love, loss and depression is presented through an anti-home discourse and through a discourse of love in *Crave* and through landscapes made entirely out of language – landscape- and images in *4.48 Psychosis*.

*Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis* are poetic meditations on desire, ravenous love and loss of control. Therefore, here dramatic language is like music, where rhythm is vital to understand the plays. Then poetic rhythm is going to build up a meditation on ravenous love, a central subject in both, *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis*.

In *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis* Kane experiments with a theatre of language, as it is being reiterated in this chapter. It is from the spoken words and their rhythm that the suspense, dramatic tension, humour and tragedy spring. Thus, it is from her passion about form that takes her to care deeply about the role of theatre in society and in the individual's heart. Once more the effect of these two plays is very powerful, thanks to her acute understanding, both philosophical and personal of the fabric of the modern world. Although some critics and writers criticize her work for its lack of stories by people, about people, for other people, which are the centre of theatre: "People and life is what I miss with Sarah" (Dromgoole, 163), I believe that both *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis* are a change of direction and in Kane's theatre are her greatest plays. However, this statement can of course be argued.

I have to admit that I owe Kane the capacity of interpreting fragmentary texts, as one visible dew in a dark and stormy night, because she is, in essence, a writer writing in resistance and these two plays are a mute farewell to this life in resistance. In her attempt to distort topics, above all those that are concerned with truth, she places herself as a resistance

writer: "C I write the truth and it kills me." (*Crave*, 184). Thus, the truth kills because when Kane tries to distort these principles in a cruel society, as it is ours, she finds that this truth is always hidden, covered with poisonous dust and mud. However, the act of writing is for her a kind of salvation, as she admitted to Clara Bayley in *Times*:

Once you have perceived that life is very cruel, the only response is to live with as much humanity, humour and freedom as you can. Writing is an expression of that. (23.1.1995)

To conclude this study and this exploration of Kane's *terrae incognitae* I have to add that I have tried to use my poetic background<sup>101</sup> in order to help to discover and visualize these images, as the plays are not performed in Spain quite often. Furthermore, I have to add that personally what I have learnt from Kane in *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis* is that although both plays chart mental anguish they conclude with the possibility of light in a space free from pain. Although hers is a theatre that offers neither solutions nor redemption, she penetrates the surface of human life with brutal truthfulness, allowing us to be ready for a kind of spiritual rebirth. She emerges from calamity with the possibility that a form of ethics can exist for harmed and devastated minds and souls. It is as though, she generously gave to us, the life that she could not have.

Therefore, what Kane opens in these two plays, thanks to her great poetic austerity, is the beginning of a research based on her use of dramatic language and on her handling of character, especially on how she presents victims and perpetrators in all her plays (not only in these two plays but also in the rest of her plays). This is what I have tried to do from the beginning of this research. Thus, the dramatic effect of these poetic economical and concise plays is entirely due to the emotional experience they present. An experience that exist behind their words and their many silences. Perhaps as her characters say, one has to choose between:

**C** Silence or violence // **B** The choice is yours.

(*Crave*, 187)

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<sup>101</sup> The author of this thesis writes poetry and prose. Some of these texts have been published.

## **VI. CONCLUSIO**

*Narratio* of Violence and *Petitio* of Solace in the Plays of  
Sarah Kane



# 1. Final Conclusion

Sarah Kane's plays confront us with disconcerting worlds full of suffering, existential despair and violence. As we have seen, the content of her plays is pure violence, internal and external violence. Thus, this patchwork<sup>102</sup> (on purpose) research has been focused on the process of violence through victims and perpetrators, present in all her plays. However, I have tried to show in this dissertation, how contradictorily some kind of solace appears in them. Therefore, it has been an analysis of Kane's plays under the antonyms (and its semantic fields) of the word solace: distress, torment, torture, rape, mutilations, dismemberments and the meaning in itself of solace: comfort, consolation, which is the hidden *quantum* by means of the poetry in her plays. Linguistic and visual poetry on stage. Consequently, the liberation, consolation or solace by means of words, of poetical words in her theatre, mainly, in her two last plays *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis*. In addition, this research has been focused on a rainbow of analyses on her and my own experience following her steps.

The intention in this work has been to show how Kane's last play was as total as her first; how her imagination and humanness are the search not for a utilitarian Utopia but primordial justice, which is the subject of her drama. Thus, we need her drama because the law cannot provide justice, because the law administers injustice to the advantage of administration. We need her plays because all morality is corrupt. However, the problem is not that we are evil, or have lost our religion or reverted to the beast, the problem is that we do not accept ourselves, we live in a permanent lie-truth. For that reason, I believe, Kane helps us to understand the logic of humanity by rediscovering drama, because we are the dramatic species and drama takes place in all human institutions and situations. Furthermore, it is also because at the same time Kane's plays seem obsessed with responding to a world where ethical response appears haphazard, non-existent and unfulfilled.

The structure of *Blasted*, *Phaedra's Love*, *Cleansed*, *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis* is awesomely brilliant. It is at the centre of modern drama. By means of this brilliant structure, that is why instead of speaking of her society she became its spokeswoman and spoke for it. Through mixing violence and poetry she seeks justice, solace, which are our human imperatives to survive as species.

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<sup>102</sup> In the sense of a rainbow of ideas with different linguistic leading threads, with the intention of giving the sense of bipolar disorder that Kane suffered and in honour to her and the creativity she always demanded even at university.

Kane's performances insist the horror they depict is not distant, not only metaphoric - or, to put it another way, as a 4.48 speaker maintains:

The defining feature of a metaphor is that it's real. ( 211)

Kane's plays demand a performative response to their violence, but although they do not suggest what that response should be, I think that her work sends ethical challenges to its spectators. In this sense there is a hidden quantum of solace. However, at the same time these plays are uncomfortable because there is no comment on the atrocities they represent.

Kane's plays produce the effect of what Foucault calls:

Effective history, which divides our emotions, dramatizes our instincts, multiplies our body and sets it against itself. (154)

History is indeed the horizon of Kane's work, and as such fuels its cruelty. Violence alone - and violence as metaphor - would not achieve the alarming cultural perspicacity that Kane's plays communicate. Kane's work depicts a deliberate, political conflation of everyday violation coupled with violation on a grand scale. Violence in Kane is not anchored solely in the everyday, nor solely in the horizon of history and thus this violence is able to mean afresh.

Kane dares us to disagree. Her theatre confrontationally insists that despite the fact that history hurts – desperately, horribly, fatally, we must not distance ourselves from its cruelty, but in search of solace. She left us an innovative work where we can perceive a brief hope under the disillusionment. A brief hope with a hidden quantum of solace:

Dear God, dear God, what shall I do? (4.48 *Psychosis*, 241)

All this research has been written on a wound as an attempt to seek human comfort, human compensation. To change suffering by an ounce of consolation. In violence, the cast of weapons come back to the starting point. Then the solace, but the compensation sometimes is only a stone, without its need of movement, a cold stone, a rancorous stone, an eroded stone. All suffering is enlarged because of the lack of solace, of compensation, besides the lies of alcohol and drugs. Kane did not drink the love she expanded. She died

drinking the lack of comfort. She entered history with *Blasted*. However, she had lost her only protective shield in the process. Because while she was a catacomb writer, it is said unknown, she had a more vital connection with herself.

I chose Sarah Kane because her plays are a credential that reveals to have been a victim or a perpetrator and not to be able to probe it in front of law because how can the majority of us show that we have been a victim? My desire is to probe the condition of a victim, when it appears only in the scars of our soul, invisible to the theatre of life.

I have tried to show how violence is a means of converting bodies into easy capital, into easy preys. As Kane herself has no anchors, no emotional stability, the pessimism, the void took power on her. The unhealthy Kane ran a zig-zag course between her sexual and individual life. I learnt it at Bristol. But, at the same time she tried to be a person and a woman. A fabric of feminism and hope magnified in her plays. Nevertheless, her balance was inclined on the person side, on the woman side and always in zigzag never stable.

By means of her work she shows the sunset of western culture. Western culture? It has been proved that the globalization of neo-liberalism (Thatcher's) destroyed the traditional solidarity without creating another way to replace it. As a result, it multiplied individual lonelineses. Therefore, it is a cultural blindness to implement the calculation as a tool for knowledge (all is measurable) because culture is internal, neoliberal-power or power is external. Culture is about subjectivity, power about objectivity. Culture is will and enthusiasm, power coercion and force. Culture involves emotion; power is all calculation and choice. The calculation ignores not only the activities of monetary economy as the subsistence, mutual favours, the use of common goods and above all the free part of our existence: joy, love, suffering, and dignity, in other words, the very fabric of our lives that cannot be calculated or measured. Kane's suffering was visible in her plays, but at the same time, she gave us this suffering as part of culture. She transformed this suffering into culture, not measured, and not calculated. With her sad ending, she was offering culture for a time like it is. Although, our culture is not far from neoliberal strategies and her drama will be turned into theatre and marketed as a consumer product and if not, forgotten.

We can now understand Sarah Kane's role in society: The owl of Minerva flies at dusk.<sup>103</sup> She was not speaking of her society, she became the spokesperson in a posthumous society with her suicide. Now she is dead and her drama will be turned into theatre and

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<sup>103</sup> Hegel in Edgar Morin (2011). *La Vía para el Futuro de la Humanidad*. Barcelona, Ed Paidós- Espasa, 19.



marketed as a consumer product. However, her prophesy is simply and inescapable: our stage finds life only in death, in her own death:

Para mí, lo esencial de una tragedia es el sexto acto:

...

...

...

el quitar la soga del cuello,

...

...

...

la reverencia de la suicida.

(*Impresiones Teatrales* poem, by Wislawa Szymborska, 169)



Photo taken at Sarah Kane's Festival, University of Lincoln, on March 26th -3st 2012.

I hope that this research has shed a light on Kane. Although the ultimate impact of her plays will depend on their representation through performance:

And the consolation shall be the reading of the contents.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> (Law 32 in The Great Law of Peace of The Longhouse People (Iroquois) (League of Six Nations) published by Akwesasne Notes n New York, 1977). It is said, taking the word "reading" as attending to the theatres as audience of Kane's plays.

## 1.1 Closing

The enigma of quantum of solace is the decent pudendum solution for the no truth, the mistruth that killed Kane, I may put it bluntly. "... Destroy yourselves, you who are desperate, and you who are tortured in body and soul, abandon all hope. There is no more solace for you in this world. The world lives off your rotting flesh."(Antonin Artaud).<sup>105</sup> Although the play *4.48 Psychosis* is a mirror of this quotation at first sight, the play, for those who believe in a bet for life, represent a constant demand of solace. The generosity of Kane is present in this posthumous work, contradictorily it may seem. So, when we listen or read, "please open the curtains" (245) the last sentence in *4.48 Psychosis* it can be linked with the following quotation:

el poeta vence a la muerte porque en vida descubre las cortinas de nuestro supremo aniquilamiento.  
(Vicente Aleixandre<sup>106</sup>)

Therefore, it could be said that Kane's plays are investigations into the limits of the self. To what extent can a person's likeness be manipulated and transformed for it until the remain is recognizable? Where and what are the boundaries beyond which a self ceases to be that self? The answer is in *4.48 Psychosis* and its last sentence:

please open the curtains. (245)

Thus, paraphrasing William Somerset Maugham "writing is the supreme solace"<sup>107</sup> and I conclude that performing is the supreme solace. Attending theatres the supreme solace.

The thread running to all this work is to distinguish victims on the bases of social position. The kind of painful event they have experienced pushed me in my first contact with Kane's plays. However, during these years my approach has suffered a mutation. It is said, my vision is a more prodigious love towards theatre and its performances, because I have learnt how to discover a victim, a perpetrator, a liberator afterwards and the solid base, which allows the survival is only a movement in favour of theatre as the means of recognizing victims of all forms of violence and more. From hope for a better life to broken spirits only

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<sup>105</sup> <http://www.quotessea.com/quotes/with/solace>

<sup>106</sup> <http://www.quotessea.com/quotes/with/solace>

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

the recovering of a victim may be with enough solace and as I have said theatre can offer this solace. I think that reviving memories of the rapes, and suffering in Kane's plays caused herself a solace. That was her main goal to write, in registering violence that produces death or violence within the domestic space.

To conclude the productions of Kane's plays have made obvious that an extremely realistic mode of representation and especially a glamorising of violence can greatly overshadow the other qualities of the texts, as they are the solace, the amount of comfort by its poetic words, so I have decided to show this overshadowed aspect of poetic words in search of solace for all the violence either realistic or glamorising.

The following work is reaching the end. This research can be named as a patch work quilt, and it could be because: in the name of Kane, who did not want any research on her, who did not like the excessive words used for art, and who among many things wished the attendance to the theatre, the reading of books, the contact with literature, the direct contact with literature, this study is an anti-study with the vivid testimony and the proof that I have seen all her plays more than once all over Europe, in gratitude to her, this is my anti-study on her, my collage kilt study on her, my patchwork visual thesis on Kane. Thus, as Lope de Vega said:

Las cartas ya sabéis que son centones, capítulos de cosas diferentes, donde apenas se engarzan las razones.<sup>108</sup>

This is why I chose the format of a letter and in an attempt to *sparsa colligo*,<sup>109</sup> I have arrived to the end.

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<sup>108</sup> Carta de Lope de Vega Don Juan de Arguijo. Epístola Nona. La Filomena (Fragmento 1621) In Breviarion de Dictamine. *Revista Litoral. Cartas y Caligrafía*. Number 248. Ed Revista Litoral, S.A. Directed by Lorenzo Saval. Málaga 2009, pp. 12.

<sup>109</sup> To gather the dispersal on my study on Kane with her bipolar disorder.



Sarah Kane directing *Woyzeck*

Not a life that I could countenance.

They will love me for that which destroys me  
the sword in my dreams  
the dust of my thoughts  
the sickness that breeds in the folds of my mind

Every compliment takes a piece of my soul.

(4.48 *Psychosis*, 213)



# Documentación en Español

## UN GRADO OCULTO DE CONSUELO:

*Narratio* de la violencia y *Petitio* de consuelo en el teatro de Sarah Kane



*A ti que me has consolado...*

Gérard de Nerval





## **SALUTATIO**



## Introducción



Mi primer contacto con los textos auténticos de Sarah Kane fue mediante la apertura de un sobre en la Universidad de Bristol, donde se contienen los originales de los "*Monólogos sin Publicar*" en el T.I.C (Centro de Investigación de Teatro) de dicha Universidad.



Esta tesis doctoral se basa en el estudio del teatro de la dramaturga inglesa Sarah Kane y en el análisis de la violencia a través de las víctimas y sus agresores, presentes en todas sus obras, y en la liberación, consuelo o bienestar mediante la palabra poética en todo su teatro, principalmente en sus dos últimas obras, *Crave* y *4.48 Psychosis*. Mi intención es mostrar que en sus obras hay una combinación de violencia y desesperanza verbalizada, junto con un estilo poético para conseguir un *quantum* (grado) significativo de consuelo. Este consuelo o bienestar por medio de sus obras es una especie de respuesta religiosa. Esta especie de respuesta religiosa no es una respuesta en el sentido ortodoxo, sino en un sentido de retribución, buscando formas de compensación. Sin embargo, esto no significa que el teatro de Kane ofrezca soluciones, redenciones o incluso consuelo. Lo que ella ofrece son momentos extremadamente vejatorios, que a su vez se tornan en momentos muy humanos, por medio de su discurso poético en el escenario y otros efectos teatrales. Estos momentos de gran crueldad convertidos, a su vez, en momentos muy humanos, mediante la utilización de palabras poéticas, constituyen el *quantum* de consuelo, el grado de consuelo. Por consiguiente, con un *quantum* de consuelo debe llegar el olvido completo tras un sufrimiento deleznable, y así provocar un cambio, un nuevo estado, tal y como dice la voz en *4.48 Psychosis*:

Observad las estrellas  
predecid el pasado  
y cambiad el mundo con un eclipse de plata.

(240)

Frecuentemente, las obras teatrales se estudian casi exclusivamente en forma escrita, y de este modo es fácil descuidar tanto la dimensión representativa en escena, como la crónica de su representación. En este sentido, el teatro como "lugar visual" no solamente proporciona un espacio para representar el mundo con sus habitantes, como se sugiere en el concepto de *theatrum mundi*, sino que el drama, en general, sirve como vehículo muy efectivo para hacer una reflexión crítica sobre la condición humana, la dimensión del conocimiento, y la transmisión de valores: basándose tanto en la comunicación visual y verbal su lenguaje es inmediato (las representaciones o mejor dicho los acontecimientos teatrales suceden "aquí y ahora") y es fácilmente accesible tanto para el hombre común como para el hombre culto. Además, la obra teatral se puede representar en cualquier época o

momento: todo lo que se necesita son actores, público, y cualquier espacio que pueda ser utilizado para la representación, ya sea un mercado, una calle, un carro o un teatro real.

El teatro es un género sumamente político e intertextual: no sólo presenta personajes que interactúan con la sociedad y luchan con las normas y valores de la época, sino que a menudo alude a discursos de género, etnia, identidad, y así sucesivamente. Por lo tanto, cuando la primera obra de Kane, *Blasted*, se representó en el Royal Court de Londres en 1995, fue etiquetada por el Daily Mail (Tinker 1995) como "una fiesta de inmundicia" debido a las escenas de masturbación, felación, *frottage*, micción, defecación, violación, violación homosexual, arrancar los ojos, y canibalismo. Sin embargo, lo que Kane quiso provocar eran nuevas formas de representación dramática proporcionando así nuevas maneras seculares y específicas de observar momentos de inactividad y ceguera epistemológica de la institucionalización política. Por lo tanto, en esta tesis, se intentará ser fiel a Kane, en la medida de lo posible, con respecto a su oposición hacia los estudios académicos e institucionalizados, en el sentido de que se convierten, muy a menudo, en un catálogo, un inventario, una lista en la historia de la literatura dramática británica que olvida la dimensión visual del teatro.

Como resultado, esta tesis es fruto de la experiencia de haber asistido a la representación de todas las obras de Kane más de una vez, en lugar de un intento de coleccionar o hacer una clasificación que haga referencia a la historia del teatro británico. Asimismo, es un conocimiento profundo sobre el contexto biográfico, teatral, poético, e histórico en que se desarrolló la obra de esta dramaturga británica. Principalmente dirigido a la audiencia que desee tener una visión de conjunto del poder social y cultural del teatro británico desde la perspectiva de Kane. En segundo lugar, está dirigido a los lectores, porque las circunstancias originales y las condiciones sociopolíticas en las que fueron escritas las obras, son componentes esenciales en cualquier obra y son indispensables para su comprensión. Como señala J.L. Stayan:

[una] obra vive en su capacidad para crear una especie de circuito eléctrico entre el actor y su audiencia y este intercambio refleja también la relación con la sociedad, entre el papel implícito sobre el escenario y la comunidad que nutre el teatro. De igual manera que la noche sigue al día, los méritos de una obra pueden no entenderse plenamente sin analizar cómo funcionó y dejó de funcionar, bajo las condiciones en las cuales fue escrita. (1996: xiii).

Además, como cualquier tesis doctoral está basada en un corpus teórico que aporta un marco contextual referido al teatro. Así también, se pone de manifiesto que Kane realizó una contribución considerable a la historia británica del teatro pero, como he dicho anteriormente, se intenta ser fiel a sus deseos y a ella misma respecto a no descuidar la historia de la representación y la dimensión representativa de las obras.

La primera parte del título "Un Grado Oculto de Consuelo" se refiere a los términos del Latín "*Quantum solatii*"<sup>110</sup> (significado: una cantidad de consuelo o grado de consuelo) y es la búsqueda del *homo ludens* tras un análisis profundo de las obras de Kane, teniendo en cuenta el punto de vista psicológico y transpersonal, porque Kane está presente de manera constante en sus obras literarias. Hay una separación muy escasa entre lo que ella ha experimentado y lo que intenta expresar. Sin embargo, puede ser considerada como una Neorromántica, debido a la característica de subjetividad constante en sus obras, al mismo tiempo, es muy importante ver la referencia continua al mundo exterior en sus obras. Por lo tanto, su corpus teatral constituye una obra de arte y no es puramente subjetividad. Además, desconocemos muchos aspectos de su biografía, principalmente porque no dejó muchos rastros de su vida personal.

Kane como autora de las obras *Blasted*, *Cleansed* y *Phaedra's Love* que escandalizaron tanto a los críticos como a la audiencia por igual, debido a sus representaciones aterradoras de violación, mutilación, canibalismo, guerra y otras formas de degradación humana, posiblemente no concibió sólo su obra en términos de desesperación. Lo que es más, utiliza las virtudes teologales de San Pablo (1ª Corintios), para caracterizar su obra en términos de "esperanza" (*Blasted*), fe (*Phaedra's Love*) y amor (*Crave*). En este sentido, su obra puede concebirse desde la experiencia basada en la certeza de que la fuerza, que debería haber actuado como protección eterna, que la fuerza de salvación, que le había sostenido a lo largo de su juventud con excesivo celo religioso, es decir, Dios, no existía. La "división" resultante entre su personalidad e intelecto provocan dos clases de conciencia: una de la mortalidad definitiva y final, la otra de la esperada salvación tras la muerte, y funcionan de tal forma a través de sus obras que, por un lado, aparece una reflexión oscura e irónica,

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<sup>110</sup> La palabra "*quantum*" viene del Latín "*quantus*" para "cuanto". En el campo de la física cuántica, es la cantidad mínima de cualquier entidad física implicada en una interacción. Esto significa que la magnitud puede tomar sólo ciertos valores discretos a nivel infinitesimal. Por ejemplo, un fotón es como un *quantum* de luz, y que se denomina "cuántica". El término inglés "consuelo" cuyo primer uso conocido fue en el siglo XIII del francés antiguo "*solas*" viene del latín "*solatium*", lo que significa una fuente de fortaleza, consuelo y tiene como antónimos angustia, tormento, tortura...



pero por otro también cómica, respecto a los conceptos religiosos como la esperanza y el consuelo. Por lo tanto, aunque el contenido de sus obras sea pura violencia interna y externa, contradictoriamente aparece una especie de consuelo, como voy a intentar demostrar en esta investigación.

El título también significa un análisis de las obras de Kane, a través de los antónimos de consuelo: angustia, tormento, tortura y el significado en sí mismo de consuelo: bienestar, consuelo, que es el "*quantum*" o grado oculto por medio de la poesía en sus obras.

Además, como es imposible evitar el hecho de que Kane se suicidó, he decidido también escribir una tesis de consuelo. A ella no le gustaba lo académico como algo ya hecho o descubierto. Lo único que anhelaba era la invención incluso sobre la propia invención. Así pues, teniendo en cuenta "*consolatio*"<sup>111</sup> como género literario, decidí adoptar dicho término (consolación) como el arte del duelo y escribir esta investigación.

Siguiendo sus propios deseos sobre la invención, la estructura de esta tesis está basada en lo que Alberic<sup>112</sup> escribió en el siglo XI, sobre las partes que forman una carta:

*SALUTATIO*

*CAPTATIO BENEVOLENTIAE*

*NARRATIO*

*PETITIO*

*CONCLUSIO*

Estas partes se escribieron en el monasterio de Monte Cassino<sup>113</sup> en Italia, uno de los paisajes más crueles de la Segunda Guerra mundial.

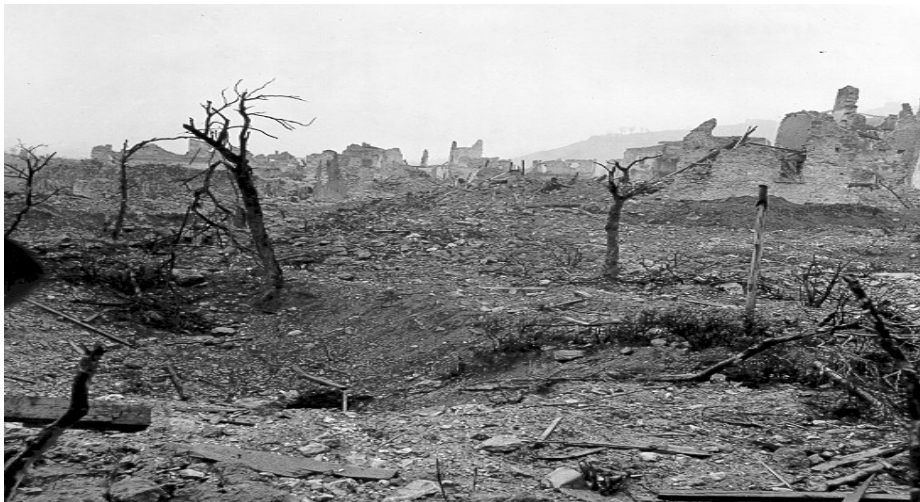
La siguiente fotografía muestra las ruinas de Monte Cassino en Italia:

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<sup>111</sup> La tradición literaria de "Consolatio"(consolation en inglés) es un amplio género literario que abarca varias formas de discursos ensayos, poemas y cartas personales centrados en el consuelo. A pesar de que varios textos antiguos contienen elementos de la tradición, fue Crantor de Soli (c. 325-C. 275 A.C ), el que primero elaboró sus obras en una tradición específica para el Consuelo. A partir de Crantor de Soli, los autores consideraron que el lenguaje podría adaptarse también a formas de consolación y consuelo en los momentos de dolor.

<sup>112</sup> Revista Litoral. Number 248. Ed. Revista Litoral, S.A. Directed by Lorenzo Saval, Málaga, 2009, p. 79.

<sup>113</sup> En el sentido de que es una especie de arco iris de ideas con diferentes hilos lingüísticos conductores, con la intención de ofrecer el aspecto de desorden bipolar que Kane sufrió y tanto en su honor, como en el de la creatividad que siempre demandó incluso en estudios académicos. Además esta investigación es sobre teatro y no podemos olvidar su aspecto visual.



Si se ha adoptado la forma de una carta para hacer este "*ars dictaminis*" sobre Kane, es debido a que la dramaturga en sus obras confronta tanto su experiencia personal como su sentido ético. Esta característica es la que se mostraba y se muestra cuando se escribe una carta personal (no tanto un correo electrónico y otras formas de Internet) o cuando se escribía en el pasado a un destinatario, el cual desempeñaba y desempeña el papel de "voyeur perverso" de la correspondencia en algunos casos, y en otros de "receptor enamorado". Además, las cartas permiten expresar los sentimientos de forma inmediata, plasmar distintos matices y abrir caminos de introspección. En resumen, las cartas pueden crear un efecto de realidad o credibilidad.

En este sentido, Erasmo de Rotterdam estableció cuatro tipos de cartas<sup>114</sup>:

Reflexiva

Comunicativa (emocional, expresiva)

Legal

Familiar (de ámbito doméstico, íntimo)

Esta tesis es una carta íntima, expresiva y emocional, pero sigue la regla científica de un ensayo: demostrar algo, mostrar algo, porque un ensayo es, sobre todo, una opinión

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<sup>114</sup> *Revista Litoral*. 248. Ed Revista Litoral, S.A. Lorenzo Saval, Málaga, 2009, p. 79.

extensa sobre algo. Así pues, mi investigación es sobre la escritora Sarah Kane, para lo que he utilizado el formato de una carta medieval (en la actualidad, las cartas están en extinción). La razón para adoptar el formato de carta en una tesis doctoral es la búsqueda de consuelo a través de la obra de la dramaturga. Varias partes de esta carta contienen estudios objetivos y subjetivos sobre Kane. La parte subjetiva para expiar el dolor y encontrar consuelo, y la parte objetiva para dar forma a esta investigación. Por tanto, en esta búsqueda de consuelo elegí un formato de carta para esta tesis:

Las cartas alimentan el alma, la rectifican, la consuelan.

Voltaire<sup>115</sup>

Mi objetivo es mostrar un trabajo analítico y creativo de lo que he aprendido sobre Kane y sobre lo que he investigado. Mi forma de análisis se puede centrar en la construcción de la imagen cultural de Kane como "revolucionaria". Este término (a su vez título de un relato escrito por Ernest Hemingway y publicado en 1925) podría referirse a aquellos que consiguen relevancia solamente en sus disciplinas individuales y aisladas<sup>116</sup>.

El tema central de esta investigación se muestra en los capítulos titulados *Narratio* y *Petitio* ("*Narratio* de la violencia y *Petitio* de consuelo en el teatro de Sarah Kane," que es también parte del título). En estos capítulos se estudia el contexto histórico social de la obra de Kane, así como su biografía y también se incluyen algunas de sus opiniones sobre el teatro y la violencia.

En esta investigación, se han utilizado fotografías (tomadas de las actuaciones), porque esta tesis es una disertación sobre teatro, y mi intención es mostrar cuerpos y voces sobre la escena. Así pues, esta tesis es tanto visual como verbal, como una suerte de verbalización en forma de patchwork para lograr un efecto visual como sucede en el teatro. También en el sentido de que es una especie de arco iris de ideas con diferentes hilos lingüísticos conductores, con la intención de ofrecer el aspecto de desorden bipolar que Kane sufrió y tanto en su honor, como en el de la creatividad, que siempre demandó incluso en estudios académicos.

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<sup>115</sup> Revista Litoral. Number 248. Ed. Revista Litoral, S.A. Dirigida por Lorenzo Saval, Málaga, 2009, p. 79.

<sup>116</sup> Este análisis fue sugerido por varios profesores como Estaban Pujals, Manuel Aguirre (...) analizando el relato "The Revolutionist" de Hemingway en un Seminario sobre Liminalidad en la Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, febrero 2000.

En cada parte, se han realizado diferentes estudios sobre la obra de Kane. En el capítulo denominado *Salutatio* se ha explicado el título y el formato de esta tesis. En el capítulo llamado *Captatio Benvevolentiae*, se presentan textos de viajes como una especie de memoria personal siguiendo los pasos de Kane. Estos textos han sido publicados (aparecen en el capítulo denominado "*Post Datum*" de esta tesis).

El capítulo denominado *Narratio* se incluyen, además, algunas notas biográficas sobre Kane. Estos aspectos biográficos muestran tanto su ingenio mordaz como su feroz coraje para crear un teatro de grandes momentos de belleza y crueldad. A continuación hay una explicación pormenorizada de todas sus obras. Asimismo, se proporciona un análisis de la sociedad de la época de Margaret Thatcher, debido a su importancia por la ruptura total que supuso con regímenes anteriores y la repercusión que tuvo en el teatro, explicando el fenómeno del Thatcherismo y su influencia en el teatro. Al mismo tiempo, se ha incluido la respuesta de la izquierda hacia esta nueva idea sobre el teatro impuesta por el partido neoliberal, además de algunas conclusiones sobre el legado del teatro de la época de Thatcher. Se han analizado por un lado, el lugar que Kane ocupó dentro del teatro británico de mediados de los años 90 y, por otro, los intereses y preocupaciones que compartió con otros escritores jóvenes de su generación.

Igualmente, se analiza el fenómeno de "in-yer-face theatre". Así pues, las representaciones sobre la violencia en Kane están incluidas en el fenómeno conocido como "in-yer-face theatre", es decir, sus audiencias, muy a menudo, se reflejan en los personajes de sus obras a través de la adicción de drogas, la sexualidad explícita y la poética de obscenidad. Kane se apoya en el impulso para crear veracidad mostrando solamente los efectos del dolor. Por otra parte, la naturaleza libertadora de su teatro se consigue mediante la provocación del dolor y después la lucha contra él. Así pues, esta característica representa la naturaleza libertadora de su teatro.

La siguiente sección de *Narratio* se denomina - Pure *Narratio*. Esta parte está dedicada completamente a examinar el tema de la violencia en Kane, y se realiza mediante diversas interpretaciones sobre la violencia en sus obras, comenzando por los vínculos entre violencia, sexualidad y poder. Además, se muestra la tortura en las obras teatrales de Kane, por medio de mutilaciones, agresiones sexuales, suicidio y antropofagia. También hay otra sección dedicada a los agresores o perpetradores de la violencia, que es una de las características principales de su obra. A continuación, hay otra sección dedicada a las víctimas y a los agresores, ya que el estudio sobre las víctimas está tomando una relevancia

importante tal y como muestran las publicaciones sobre el tema en la actualidad. Teniendo en cuenta que aunque las víctimas llevan escrito el dolor toda su vida y son consideradas siempre culpables, es solamente mediante el consuelo, cuando la recuperación de la víctima puede lograrse. Además, tras un gran sufrimiento se debe llegar al olvido. También se incluye un estudio sobre el tema de la violación, de gran importancia en su obra. La parte denominada "Desmembrar el Cuerpo" constituye otro estudio importante sobre la violencia. Sin embargo, al mismo tiempo que aparece el estudio sobre la violencia externa, se ha considerado importante dedicar un capítulo a la violencia interna, ya que vivimos en época de extrema ansiedad y anhelo muy presentes en las obras de Kane.

El siguiente aspecto es un estudio sobre el trauma. Mi intención ha sido, por un lado entender y, por otro, enseñar a comprender este fenómeno, porque en menos de veinte años, la noción de trauma psicológico se ha impuesto en la sociedad de tal manera que se convierte en la realidad central de la violencia.

En el capítulo siguiente titulado *Petitio*, se analiza cómo el tema de la violencia en las obras de Kane pide un grado oculto de consuelo por medio de la poesía, que principalmente está presente en sus dos últimas obras. Estas obras, *4.48 Psychosis* y *Crave*, constituyen la parte llamada "*Terrae incognitae* (tierras desconocidas) a través de diferentes voces", que formaban parte del estudio preliminar en mi trabajo de investigación. Partiendo de este punto he profundizado en la idea del lenguaje poético como un grado oculto de consuelo.

*Crave* se analizará bajo este título: "Extraña Comunidad de Hablantes" por medio de una tabla. Esta tabla mostrará el tema central de esta parte, como es la exploración del lenguaje dramático a través de diferentes discursos:

- 1- Un discurso donde los personajes están desarraigados.
- 2- Un discurso de amor.
- 3- Arquitectura del discurso.

En la primera parte: "Un discurso donde los personajes están desarraigados" (fuera del hogar como lugar de afectos, y estabilidad) se analiza cómo el discurso de *Crave* busca un espacio nuevo por medio de una transmutación del lugar. En este nuevo espacio, las dislocaciones que van a aparecer oscilan del micro al macro espacio a fin de mostrar dramáticamente la desintegración de la mente humana. Esta desintegración aparece en varios

niveles de ubicación bajo la presión del amor, la pérdida y el deseo en una ciudad sin nombre y en un lugar sin especificar.

En la segunda parte: "Un discurso de amor", se analiza cómo *Crave* es un poema de amor dramático. Kane muestra la correspondencia entre los dos elementos de una relación: un fuerte deseo seguido de obsesión, corrupción, propiedad y ruptura, como consecuencia de este fuerte deseo inicial y así, impidiendo la culminación de dicha relación. La dramaturga también examina cómo el amor encarna dos pugnas constantes como son la pérdida de control y la necesidad desesperada de obtener el control. Además, Kane muestra la melancolía que existe bajo la superficie del amor, porque como el título sugiere, "*Crave*", significa una exigencia de perdón. En este sentido, el discurso de amor se examina sin sentimentalismo corrosivo, convirtiéndose en una lectura y representación místicas.

En la tercera parte: "Arquitectura del discurso", se estudia cómo Kane experimenta con el lenguaje y la forma con la finalidad de ofrecer una conexión recíproca entre drama y poesía en el campo del poema en prosa. Con *Crave*, Kane expresa la musicalidad del lenguaje, puesto que el lenguaje que utiliza es lírico y, tanto la música como el ritmo y la orquestación son tan esenciales como el contenido para entender la obra. La arquitectura del discurso de esta obra es compleja y se expresa a través de la repetición recurrente y de las imágenes de tierra baldía, a través de las figuras de nihilismo, de degeneración y desesperación. Por lo tanto, también veremos el *decorum* de esta arquitectura del discurso mediante un análisis de las cualidades poéticas y la intertextualidad.

Seguidamente, el análisis se centrará en concepto lang-scape (paisaje lingüístico) de 4.48 *Psicosis* como poema en prosa. El objetivo de este capítulo es proporcionar una visión del lenguaje utilizado en la última obra de Kane, a través de dos dimensiones: el lenguaje-paisaje del teatro y el lenguaje como poema en prosa. De nuevo, también esta parte comenzará con una explicación del título elegido "*Terra incognita* (Tierra desconocida) rodeada de palabras bajo una luz que aniquila" mediante una tabla explicativa.

En la conclusión de esta sección, se destaca la importancia del lenguaje dramático de Kane anteriormente analizado con el fin de abrir campos adicionales para futuras investigaciones sobre esta autora y el teatro británico contemporáneo.

Debido a la importancia que Kane da en sus obras a la interacción entre los lenguajes de la audiencia/representación/personaje/escenario, el enfoque que se seguirá en esta parte será principalmente hermenéutico y fenomenológico.

La última parte de este formato de carta para esta tesis es *Conclusio*, donde se unifican, como si fuera una suerte de patchwork verbal, todas las sombras del arco iris verbalizado que constituyen esta tesis.

Como todo formato de carta contiene también un *Post Scriptum*, en el que se incluye la Bibliografía.

En el *Post Datum* se incluye una *Addenda* con tres partes. La primera, denominada *Captatio Benevolentiae*, contiene los textos publicados en *La Opinión* de Tenerife. En la segunda, denominada *Matrices*, se incluye todo el material testimonio sobre mi asistencia a representaciones de las obras de Kane, festivales, conferencias, posters y otros eventos, puesto que son la evidencia de la asistencia a dichas representaciones por los escenarios europeos y otras instituciones donde se ha investigado la obra de la dramaturga. En la tercera parte, bajo el nombre de *Pondus*, se incluyen fotografías personales relevantes de dicho recorrido, siempre y cuando ha sido posible. Finalmente, se presenta un *Epilogus* con ciertas citas literarias que me han ayudado en la investigación y la sección *Postera Fascia*, que muestra el seudónimo utilizado en publicaciones y otros eventos.

## CONCLUSIÓN

### UN GRADO OCULTO DE CONSUELO:

*Narratio* de la Violencia y *Petitio* de Consuelo en el  
Teatro de Sarah Kane





## 1. Conclusión de las Partes Poéticas

He llegado al final de este triste y repugnante  
relato internado en un cadáver alienígena y  
lumpen por el espíritu maligno de la mayoría moral.

(4.48 *Psicosis*, 214)

Esta parte de la investigación se ha centrado en el análisis del lenguaje dramático que Kane utiliza tanto en *Crave* como en 4.48 *Psicosis*. Se han analizado formas del discurso tales como un discurso donde los personajes están desarraigados, un discurso de amor y la arquitectura del discurso junto con sus características poéticas en *Crave*. Se ha detallado el término "langscape" (paisaje lingüístico) en 4.48 *Psicosis* y también se ha examinado esta obra como un poema en prosa. Puesto que estas dos obras son consideradas por los críticos como "lingüísticas", se espera haber demostrado de forma convincente en este capítulo que el estudio realizado sobre la utilización del lenguaje en Kane, tanto en *Crave* como en 4.48 *Psicosis*, haya servido para descubrir los aspectos lingüísticos de estas dos *terrea incognitae* (tierras desconocidas). Según Kenyon, "Sarah era un animal de teatro" (Saunders, 145) y ella misma dijo sobre todas sus obras en su última carta: "Éstas no son piezas de museo. Quiero que se representen" (Ibíd., 145). Por tanto, se ha pretendido exponer aquellos rasgos de su obra dramática que delimitan, desde un punto de vista personal, su importancia como dramaturga. Las argumentaciones se apoyan en la crítica, aunque es muy importante destacar que no existe demasiada crítica literaria sobre Kane en formato libro. Existen sí muchos artículos de revista (no sólo sobre *Crave* o 4.48 *Psicosis*, sino también sobre *Phaedra's Love*, *Blasted* y *Cleansed*) y se han utilizado como base teórica para esta tesis.

Críticos, como Nightingale, declaran que el cisma existente entre la obra de Kane y la mayor parte del teatro de otros dramaturgos contemporáneos es: "el empleo de la imagen y la metáfora de forma muy diferente al resto de los dramaturgos de su generación" (citado en Saunders, 2002, 126). En este sentido, uno de los aspectos más importantes en *Crave* y 4.48 *Psicosis*, es que Kane libera el lenguaje de banalidad y vuelve al discurso dramático poético.

Como hemos visto, el lenguaje dramático en *Crave* y 4.48 *Psicosis* puede explorarse a través de una fluctuación entre lo intensamente personal y lo poderosamente abstracto.

Esta serie de meditaciones desconectadas (en *Crave* a través de cuatro voces: A, M, B, C y en 4.48 *Psicosis* a través de voces anónimas y sin denominación) siguen un criterio de

constante fragmentación y reensamblaje para evitar las expectativas convencionales acerca de unidad y coherencia del argumento y el personaje. Sin embargo, detrás de esta serie de meditaciones desconectadas, hay un estudio pormenorizado y evidente sobre el abuso, la traición, el amor, la pérdida y la depresión que se presenta a través de un discurso donde los personajes están desarraigados y a través de un discurso de amor en *Crave* y mediante paisajes lingüísticos e imágenes en *4.48 Psychosis*.

*Crave* y *4.48 Psychosis* son meditaciones poéticas sobre el deseo, el amor voraz y destructor y la pérdida de control. Por lo tanto, aquí el lenguaje dramático es como la música, en la que el ritmo estructura la melodía. Así pues, el ritmo poético construirá una meditación sobre el amor destructivo, tema central en ambas obras.

Tanto en *Crave* como en *4.48 Psicosis*, Kane experimenta con un teatro basado en el lenguaje, como se ha reiterado en este capítulo. Es desde las palabras pronunciadas y el ritmo en dicha emisión de donde emergen el suspense, la tensión dramática, el humor y la tragedia. De este modo, desde su pasión por la forma, Kane cuida también su preocupación profunda sobre la función del teatro en la sociedad y en el corazón del individuo. Una vez más, el efecto de estas dos obras es muy poderoso, gracias a su percepción penetrante, tanto filosófica como personal del tejido del mundo moderno. Aunque algunos críticos y escritores censuran su trabajo como carente de historias sobre las personas, de las personas y para las personas, que son el centro del teatro: "la gente y la vida es lo que echo de menos con Sarah" (Dromgoole, 163), considero que ambas *Crave* y *4.48 Psychosis* representan un cambio de rumbo porque sin duda son sus mejores obras.

He de admitir que le debo a Kane la capacidad de interpretar los textos en fragmentos, como si se tratara de un rocío visible en una noche oscura y tormentosa, porque ella es, en esencia, una escritora en la resistencia y estas dos obras son un adiós silencioso a esta vida de resistencia. En su intento de distorsionar temas, sobre todo aquellos que se refieren a la verdad, Kane se posiciona como una escritora en permanente rebeldía:

:

"C Escribo la verdad y ella me mata" (*Crave*, 184)

Por tanto, la verdad mata porque cuando Kane intenta distorsionar estos principios en una sociedad cruel, como es la nuestra, encuentra que esta verdad está siempre oculta, cubierta de polvo venenoso y de barro. Sin embargo, el acto de escribir es para ella una especie de salvación, como admitió a Clara Bayley en *Times*:

Una vez que has percibido que la vida es cruel, la única respuesta es vivir con toda la humanidad, humor y libertad que puedas. Escribir es una expresión de eso. (23.1.1995)

Para terminar, en este estudio y esta exploración de las *terrae incognitae* (tierras desconocidas) de Kane tengo que añadir que se ha intentado utilizar mi experiencia y conocimientos poéticos<sup>117</sup> para ayudar a descubrir y visualizar estas imágenes, ya que sus obras no se representan en España con frecuencia. También, he de añadir que personalmente lo que he aprendido de Kane en *Crave* y *4.48 Psychosis* es que, aunque ambas obras trazan la angustia mental, ambas concluyen con la posibilidad de luz en un espacio liberado de dolor. El teatro de esta dramaturga no ofrece soluciones o redenciones de forma convencional. Kane penetra en la superficie de la vida humana con total honestidad, permitiéndonos estar preparados para una especie de catarsis y renacimiento espiritual. La obra de la dramaturga emerge desde la desgracia con la posibilidad de que una forma de ética pueda existir para las mentes y almas dañadas y devastadas.

Por tanto, lo que Kane saca a la luz en estas dos obras, gracias a su gran austeridad poética, es el comienzo de una investigación basada en la utilización del lenguaje dramático y la forma de tratar el personaje, especialmente en la forma en que presenta a las víctimas y a los agresores en todas sus obras (no solamente en estas dos obras, también en el resto). Estos aspectos son los que se han intentado abordar desde el inicio de esta investigación. Así pues, el efecto dramático de estas obras concisas, breves y poéticas se debe enteramente a la experiencia emocional que presentan. Una experiencia que existe detrás de las palabras y sus muchos silencios. Quizá como dice uno de sus personajes, se debe de escoger entre:

C Silencio o violencia. // B La elección es vuestra. (*Crave*, 187)

## 2. Conclusión Final

Las obras de Sarah Kane nos enfrentan a mundos desconcertantes llenos de sufrimiento, desesperación existencial y violencia. Como hemos señalado, el contenido de sus obras es pura violencia, interna y externa. Así esta investigación que asemeja a un

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<sup>117</sup> La autora de esta tesis escribe poesía y prosa. Algunos de estos textos han sido traducidos.

mosaico verbal<sup>118</sup> (intencionadamente) y se ha centrado en analizar la violencia a través de las víctimas y sus agresores presentes en toda su obra. Sin embargo, se ha intentado mostrar también en esta tesis doctoral, cómo Kane desarrolla el consuelo en su teatro. Por lo tanto, esta investigación se basa en antónimos junto con los campos semánticos de la palabra consuelo: angustia, tormento, tortura, violación, mutilaciones, desmembraciones y el significado mismo del consuelo: bienestar, alivio, lenidad, bálsamo que es el *quantum* o grado oculto de consuelo que se consigue por medio de la poesía en sus obras: poesía lingüística y visual sobre el escenario. Asimismo, se ha centrado en el estudio de la liberación y el consuelo a través de la palabra poética en su teatro, principalmente en sus dos últimas obras *Crave* y *4.48 Psychosis*. Además, esta investigación, como he mencionado con anterioridad, se ha enfocado en un amplio arco iris de análisis sobre su obra y en el estudio de la representación de dicha obra en teatros de Madrid y en otros teatros europeos.

La intención de esta tesis ha sido demostrar cómo la última obra estaba tan lograda como la primera; cómo su imaginación y humanidad son la búsqueda no de una utopía utilitaria sino de justicia, que es el tema de su teatro. Por lo tanto, tenemos necesidad de sus obras teatrales porque la ley no puede impartir justicia, dado que en muchos casos la ley administra una justicia que beneficia a la administración. Necesitamos su obra por la corrupción que impera en nuestra sociedad. Sin embargo, el problema no es que seamos malvados, o que se haya perdido la ética o la moral, revirtiendo a la bestia; el problema es que no nos aceptamos a nosotros mismos porque vivimos en una permanente mentira-verdad. Por esta razón, Kane nos ayuda a entender la lógica de la humanidad, descubriendo de nuevo el teatro, ya que somos la única especie que practica el arte del teatro y la experiencia teatral ocurre en todas las situaciones y sociedades humanas desde tiempos inmemoriales. Además, las obras de Kane parecen obsesionadas con responder a un mundo donde la respuesta ética aparece en peligro, inexistente e incompleta.

La estructura de *Blasted*, *Phaedra's Love*, *Cleansed*, *Crave* y *4.48 Psychosis* es asombrosamente brillante. Ocupa un lugar central en el teatro moderno. Por medio de esta estructura lúcida, es por lo que, en lugar de hablar de la sociedad, Kane se convirtió en su

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<sup>118</sup> En el sentido de que es una especie de arco iris de ideas con diferentes hilos lingüísticos conductores, con la intención de ofrecer el aspecto de desorden bipolar que Kane sufrió tanto en su honor como en el de la creatividad que siempre demandó incluso en estudios académicos. Además, esta investigación es sobre teatro y no podemos olvidar su aspecto visual.

portavoz y habló por ella. Con la mezcla de poesía y violencia, ella buscaba justicia, consuelo, que son nuestros imperativos mayores para sobrevivir como especie.

Las representaciones teatrales de las obras de Kane insisten en que el horror que ellas describen no es distante, no solamente metafórico o, por decirlo de alguna otra manera, tal y como una voz de 4.48 mantiene:

El rasgo de definición de una metáfora es que es real. (4.48 *Psychosis*, 211)

Las obras de Kane exigen una respuesta representativa de su violencia, pero aunque no sugieren cuál debería ser la respuesta, creo que su obra plantea desafíos éticos a sus espectadores, lo que plantea un cierto grado de consuelo. Sin embargo, al mismo tiempo, estas obras son incómodas, ya que no hay explicaciones sobre las atrocidades que representan. En este sentido, las obras de Kane producen el efecto de lo que Foucault llama:

Historia efectiva, que divide nuestras emociones, dramatiza nuestros instintos, multiplica nuestro cuerpo y lo dispone contra sí mismo. (154)

La historia es, por supuesto, el horizonte de las obras de Kane, y como tal alimenta su crueldad. La violencia sola y la violencia como metáfora no lograrían la alarmante perspicacia cultural que las obras de Kane comunican. El trabajo de Kane describe una confluencia política y deliberada de la violación cotidiana junto con la violación a gran escala. La violencia en su obra no está anclada únicamente en la vida cotidiana, ni en el horizonte de la historia y, de este modo, es capaz de significar algo nuevo.

De esta forma, la dramaturga se atreve a contrariarnos. Su teatro, de manera polémica insiste en que, a pesar del hecho de que la historia hiere de manera horrible, desesperada y fatal, no debemos distanciarnos de nosotros mismos desde esta crueldad, sino buscar consuelo. Kane nos dejó una obra muy innovadora donde podemos percibir una breve esperanza desde la desilusión. Una breve esperanza con un grado oculto de consuelo:

Amado Dios, amado Dios, ¿qué haré? (4.48 *Psychosis*, 241)

Toda esta investigación se ha escrito sobre una herida, en un intento de buscar compensación humana, bienestar humano: para cambiar el sufrimiento por una pequeña dosis de alivio. En el transcurso de la violencia al final se vuelve a un punto de partida. Después

llega un supuesto alivio, pero el consuelo a veces es solo una piedra inmóvil, una fría piedra, una piedra sin piedad, una piedra erosionada. Todo el sufrimiento se agranda debido a la falta de consuelo, de estímulo, además de las mentiras del alcohol y las drogas. Desde mi punto de vista, Kane murió ahogándose por la falta de consuelo. Entró en la historia con *Blasted*, pero había perdido su escudo protector en el proceso y, mientras fue una escritora de catacumba (es decir sin proyección exterior), tuvo más conexión vital con ella misma.

Elegí la obra de Sarah Kane como objeto de investigación y reflexión porque su teatro nos muestra con crudeza la encarnación de la víctima y el agresor, el haber sido una víctima o un agresor y no poder probarlo ante la ley porque ¿cómo podemos demostrar la mayoría de nosotros que hemos sido una víctima cuando solo aparece en las cicatrices de nuestra alma, invisibles al teatro de la vida?

He intentado mostrar cómo la violencia, tanto externa como interna, es un medio que convierte el cuerpo en capital fácilmente asequible, como una presa dócil. Puesto que Kane no tenía anclajes, carecía de estabilidad emocional y el pesimismo junto con el vacío se apoderaron de ella. Así pues, la frágil Kane se precipitaba en zig-zag entre su vida privada y pública<sup>119</sup>. Pero, al mismo tiempo intentaba ser persona y mujer, con una perspectiva feminista de la vida. Sin embargo, su equilibrio se inclinaba hacia el vacío en zig-zag y perdió el control sobre su vida porque estaba enferma.

Mediante su obra nos muestra el ocaso de la cultura occidental. ¿Cultura occidental? Se ha demostrado que la globalización y el neo-liberalismo de Margaret Thatcher destruyeron la solidaridad tradicional sin crear otra forma para reemplazarla. Como resultado, se multiplicaron las soledades individuales. Por tanto, es una ceguera cultural intentar aplicar el cálculo como herramienta de conocimiento (todo es mensurable) porque la cultura es un hecho interno, mientras que el poder neoliberal, o el poder es externo. La cultura aborda la subjetividad y el poder se basa en la objetividad. Cultura es voluntad y entusiasmo, el poder coerción y fuerza. La cultura implica emoción; el poder es todo cálculo y elección. El cálculo ignora no sólo las actividades monetarias como forma de subsistencia, los favores mutuos, el uso de los bienes comunes y, sobre todo, la parte libre en nuestra existencia: alegría, amor, sufrimiento, y dignidad, en otras palabras, el tejido mismo de nuestras vidas que no puede ser calculado o medido. El sufrimiento de Kane era visible en sus obras, pero al mismo tiempo, nos legó este sufrimiento como parte de la cultura.

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<sup>119</sup> Tuve la oportunidad de confirmarlo en Bristol en septiembre 2008, al visitar los lugares de sus experiencias vitales.

Transformó este sufrimiento en cultura, sin medir y sin calcular. Con su triste final, nos estaba ofreciendo cultura para un tiempo como éste. Aunque nuestra cultura no está alejada de las estrategias neoliberales y su drama volverá al teatro, se comercializará como un producto de consumo o se olvidará.

Ahora podemos entender el papel de Sarah Kane en la sociedad: el búho de Minerva vuela en la oscuridad<sup>120</sup>. Con su suicidio, Sarah Kane se convirtió en portavoz póstuma e involuntaria de la sociedad. Tras su desaparición, su dramaturgia volverá a escena y, como he dicho anteriormente, se comercializará como un producto de consumo. Sin embargo, su profecía es simple e ineludible: nuestro escenario encuentra vida sólo en la muerte, en la propia muerte de Kane, tal y como sugieren los versos de la poeta polaca Szymborska:

Para mí, lo esencial de una tragedia es el sexto acto:

...  
...  
...  
el quitar la soga del cuello,  
...  
...  
...  
la reverencia de la suicida.

(Wisława Szymborska, *Impresiones Teatrales*, 169)

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<sup>120</sup> Hegel en Morin, Edgar (2011). *La Vía para el Futuro de la Humanidad*. Barcelona, Ed Paidós-Espasa, 19.





Fotografía tomada en el Festival sobre Sarah Kane, Universidad de Lincoln, 26-31 de marzo 2012.

Es mi deseo que esta investigación haya arrojado luz sobre la vida y la obra de Sarah Kane. Aunque el impacto final de sus obras dependerá de su representación en los teatros.

Y el consuelo será la lectura del contenido.<sup>121</sup>

## 2.1 Cierre

El enigma del grado de consuelo arroja un halo de luz frente al pesimismo y aceptación de la forma de destrucción que Kane adoptó para ella misma, según el dramaturgo francés Antonin Artaud:

Destruiros a vosotros mismo, vosotros los que estás desesperados, los que sois torturados en cuerpo y alma, abandonad toda esperanza. No hay más consuelo para vosotros en este mundo. El mundo vive de su carne podrida. (Antonin Artaud).<sup>122</sup>

Aunque la obra *4.48 Psychosis* es un espejo de esta cita, la obra es, además, para todos aquellos que apuestan por la vida, una petición de consuelo. La generosidad de Kane está presente en esta obra póstuma, aunque pueda parecer contradictorio. Así pues, cuando

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<sup>121</sup> (Ley 32 en *La Gran Ley de Paz en los Iroquois* (Liga de las Seis Naciones) publicado por Akwesasne Notes en Nueva York, 1977), tomando el término lectura también como asistencia a los teatros para ver representada su obra.

<sup>122</sup> <http://www.quotessea.com/quotes/with/solace>

escuchamos o leemos, "por favor descorred el telón" (245) la última frase en *4.48 Psychosis* se puede asociar a la siguiente cita:

El poeta vence a la muerte porque en vida descorre las cortinas de nuestro supremo aniquilamiento.

(Vicente Aleixandre)<sup>123</sup>

Por lo tanto, se puede decir que las obras de Kane son investigaciones dentro de los límites del ser. ¿En qué medida puede la apariencia de una persona manipularse y transformarse hasta que parezca totalmente irreconocible? ¿Dónde y cuáles son los límites más allá de los cuales el ser deja de ser ese ser? La respuesta está en la obra *4.48 Psychosis* y su última frase:

por favor descorred el telón. (245)

Así pues, parafraseando a William Somerset Maugham "escribir es el consuelo supremo"<sup>124</sup> personalmente concluyo que las representaciones teatrales son el supremo consuelo. Asistir al teatro el supremo consuelo.

El hilo conductor de todo este trabajo es distinguir a las víctimas desde las diferentes bases de su posición social. El dolor experimentado por las víctimas fue lo que empujó mi primer contacto con las obras de Kane. Sin embargo, durante estos años mi enfoque ha sufrido una mutación. Es decir, mi visión es más un amor prodigioso hacia el teatro y sus representaciones, porque he aprendido cómo descubrir una víctima, un agresor, un libertador posteriormente y, la única base sólida, que permite la supervivencia, es solamente un movimiento a favor del teatro, como medio de reconocer a las víctimas de la violencia en todas sus formas. Desde la esperanza por una vida mejor para los ánimos fracturados, solo se puede recuperar a la víctima con una dosis de consuelo suficiente y, como he dicho anteriormente, el teatro puede ofrecer este consuelo. Creo que revivir el recuerdo de las violaciones y el sufrimiento que éstas generan en sus obras teatrales le hizo experimentar el consuelo a la propia Kane. Esa fue su principal motivación para escribir, registrar la violencia que provoca la muerte y la violencia dentro del espacio doméstico.

Para concluir, las representaciones de las obras de Kane ponen de manifiesto un modo extremadamente realista de representación y, sobre todo, una sofisticada puesta en escena de

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<sup>123</sup> <http://www.quotessea.com/quotes/with/solace>

<sup>124</sup> <http://www.quotessea.com/quotes/with/solace>

la violencia lo que puede eclipsar en gran medida otras características de los textos, como son el consuelo y el grado de alivio producido por el lenguaje poético. Así pues, se ha tratado de mostrar este aspecto eclipsado de la palabra poética en busca de consuelo para toda la violencia tanto real o estética que aparece en el escenario.

Esta investigación puede ser definida como un mosaico verbal en homenaje a Sarah Kane, quien no deseaba investigación académica alguna sobre ella, ya que no le gustaba el exceso verbal referido al arte, porque lo que más valoraba era la asistencia al teatro y el contacto directo con la literatura. De este modo, este estudio es una suerte de testimonio, que se origina en la praxis de haber visto en escena todas sus obras más de una vez por toda Europa. Para mostrar mi eterno agradecimiento a todo lo que me ha enseñado su obra, mi investigación es un mosaico verbal. Y así, como Lope de Vega dijo:

Las cartas ya sabéis que son centones, capítulos de cosas diferentes, donde apenas se engarzan las razones<sup>125</sup>.

Esta es la razón por la cual escogí el formato de una carta y en un intento de *sparsa colligo*, (recoger lo disperso)<sup>126</sup> he llegado al final.

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<sup>125</sup> Carta de Lope de Vega Don Juan de Arguijo. Epístola Nona. *La Filomena* (Fragmento 1621). En Breviario de Dictamine. *Revista Litoral. Cartas y Caligrafía*, 248. Ed. Revista Litoral, S.A. Lorenzo Saval. Málaga 2009, página 12.

<sup>126</sup> Para asociar y unir la dispersión de mi estudio sobre Kane con su trastorno bipolar.



Sarah Kane dirigiendo *Woyzeck*

No es una vida que yo estuviera dispuesta a aprobar.

Me amarán por aquello que me destruye  
la espada en mis sueños  
la ceniza de mis pensamientos  
la dolencia que se engendra en los pliegues de mi mente.

Cada cumplido arranca un trozo de mi alma.

(4.48 *Psychosis*, 213)



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### **3.1 Wireless Programmes**

*Start the Week*, broadcast on BBC Radio 4, 20 February 1995



**POST DATUM**





## *Addenda*



## ***1. Captatio Benevolentiae***



elevación intelectual. (...) Esta actitud llega a perjudicar la actividad de las mejores inteligencias, ya que la ...

wetenschap en reelt vitenskap og kulturen 과학 및 문화 luonnontiede ja kulttuurinen

## TEATRO XXI

COORDINADO POR:  
ISABEL DELGADO CORUJO

# SEGUIR LA ESTELA DE UNA LUZ HERIDA: SARAH KANE

ME HUBIERA GUSTADO QUE KANE NOS HUBIERA DEJADO UN ENSAYO, UN ELEMENTO ESCLARECEDOR DE MUCHOS ASPECTOS, PERO PREFIRIÓ IRSE, COMO SE VAN LOS SANTOS GUERRILLEROS, CON LA LUZ HERIDA. PREFIRIÓ IRSE SIR DEJARNOS ESOS TORRENTES DE PALABRAS QUE MUCHAS VECES NO DICEN NADA.

POR ÉBOLI DE MER\*

Mis últimos pasos por Inglaterra tropezaron con la casa donde nació William Shakespeare. Esta casa está cerca de Birmingham, ciudad en la que la dramaturga inglesa Sarah Kane realizó sus últimos estudios universitarios. El día anterior, un jueves de noviembre del pasado año 2008, me había citado con Mr David Edgar, el dramaturgo que vive en Birmingham y fue profesor de Kane. Mr Edgar artista, hombre, inglés, continental y, posible hombre ficticio en una de las obras de Kane, me citó en una estación al pie de las escaleras metálicas. No nos habíamos visto nunca, pero él me reconoció al primer cruce de miradas. Me invitó a un té en un café de dicha estación perdida. Entonces comenzó a hablarme sobre Kane, con la arrogancia del gran dramaturgo e intelectual inglés, admitiendo la misma o superior arrogancia en ella. Luego fuimos a su casa en la zona musulmana y me entregó dos artículos. Uno de ellos sobre Kane, y otro sobre su esposa que murió de cáncer el mismo día que Kane se suicidó. La noticia coincidió a la vez en la misma página de periódico.

Una vez en la habitación del hotel, lejos de su casa inglesa y de su influencia los lei detenidamente, hasta quitarme el uniforme de investigadora y ponerme el de amante sólo y exclusivamente de la literatura para volver al recuerdo de Bristol, donde estuve el pasado septiembre también tras los pasos de Kane. En Bristol transcurrieron sus primeros años de universidad... Allí pude ver las semillas de su obra en sus tres monólogos sin publicar, gracias a otro

de sus profesores Mr Simon Jones que me brindó la oportunidad de leerlos en el teatro del departamento donde fueron representados por la misma Kane. Desde allí tracé el camino que Kane recorrió hasta llegar donde llegó... Seguir los pasos de alguien que decide suicidarse en un esfuerzo inmedible,

esperanza tan sólo depositada en mis libretas y mis notas... Le debo a Kane muchas realidades posibles en mi vida, ella me hizo ver que el momento libertador a veces consiste en coger la pistola cargada como lo hizo Cate, la chica tonta doblemente violada por Ian, el periodista maduro, y apuntar sin dis-

Me hubiera gustado que Kane nos hubiera dejado un ensayo, un elemento esclarecedor de muchos aspectos, pero prefirió irse, como se van los santos guerrilleros, con la luz herida. Prefirió irse sir dejarnos esos torrentes de palabras que muchas veces no dicen nada. Lo suyo era el teatro y los actores, el otro mundo junto al mundo cotidiano.

Acoger a la rebelde Kane y enfrentarla allí, en su Inglaterra natal es algo que sólo los herederos del Ché, de Ernesto Guevara, pueden hacer. Estoy hablando de los argentinos y cuando hablo de herencia hablo de la actriz argentina Leonor Manso y su interpretación 4.48 Psychosis en el teatro de la villa de Madrid, el de Fernán Gómez. Desconozco si por las venas de Leonor corre la sangre del Ché, pero lo que sí reconozco es su pertenecer a esa tierra donde el fado se convierte en tango. Gracias a Leonor, Kane se encarna en la escena con esta obra póstuma. Leonor es una actriz que sabe viajar en las palabras sufrientes del último texto de Kane. Sabe balancear la poesía con la desesperación y sabe hacer que el telón se suba para siempre, como en las últimas palabras de la obra de Kane.

Leonor Manso ha representado 4.48 en Madrid y Majadahonda durante febrero 2009. También nos ha ofrecido un coloquio de aprendizaje durante dos días... Leonor nos ha enseñado la liturgia del teatro donde el alma se toca y las palabras se encarnan. Ella sabe muy bien cuándo Kane toca el alma y nos lo ha querido legar con esta representación. Gracias Leonor.



sobre todo porque la estela a seguir está totalmente herida, empapada de una sangre que no pide venganza o justicia, ni ninguna de las emociones extremas, que aparecen en su teatro y que tanta catarsis nos proporcionan. Seguir sus pasos por Inglaterra me exigía una mayor dosis de adhesión a la esperanza,

parar, apuntar al cerebro de todos los lan del mundo sin derramar ni una sola gota de sangre, sin huir, sin matar... simplemente convertirse en una víctima activa para siempre, como lo son casi todas sus protagonistas femeninas, como lo fue ella misma, pese a cometer suicidio ahora hace una década.

\*Éboli de Mer es licenciada en filología inglesa por la Universidad de Valladolid. Tiene varias publicaciones de poesía y prosa. Es traductora de la poetisa inglesa Ruth Fairlight. Actualmente está realizando su tesis doctoral en la Universidad Autónoma de Madrid sobre Sarah Kane con el título: "Víctimas, verdugos y libertadores en la obra de Sarah Kane".

ESTE AÑO SE CUMPLEN 10 AÑOS DE LA MUERTE DE SARAH KANE. UNA DE LAS AUTORAS MÁS IMPORTANTE DEL TEATRO BRITÁNICO Y FIGURAS CLAVE DEL LLAMADO "IN-YER-FACE THEATRE". EL 20 DE FEBRERO DE 1999 PONDRÍA FIN A SU VIDA EN LONDRES, TENÍA SÓLO VEINTIOCHO AÑOS.



*molido, cruzando puentes frágiles como galletas. Cuando el perseguidor está a punto de alcanzarlo, ...*  
znanost pa kultura wetenschap en cultuur science and culture znanje i kultura

► **TEATRO XXI**  
COORDINADO POR ISABEL  
DELGADO

# VIAJANDO AL LADO DE SARAH KANE. DIARIO DE ÉBOLI DE MER\* (I)



SARAH KANE.

ESTE AÑO SE CUMPLEN 10 AÑOS DE LA MUERTE DE SARAH KANE, UNA DE LAS AUTORAS MÁS IMPORTANTES DEL TEATRO BRITÁNICO Y FIGURA CLAVE DEL LLAMADO *IN-YER-FACE THEATRE*. EL 20 DE FEBRERO DE 1999 PONDRÍA FIN A SU VIDA EN LONDRES, TENÍA SÓLO VEINTIOCHO AÑOS. A MODO DE HOMENAJE PUBLICAREMOS UNA SERIE DE ARTÍCULOS DE LA FILÓLOGA Y ESPECIALISTA DE KANE, ÉBOLI DE MER, UN DIARIO PERSONAL DE IMPRESIONES SOBRE ESTA AUTORA.

Lo que voy a narrar a continuación tiene su raíz en la envidia parásita, sepultada en las calles de Londres, cercanas a la parada de metro de Gloucester, y aunque es la mala yerba del camino que tuve que recorrer, al final hay una flor de gratitud hacia Sarah Kane.

Mi inclinación a Kane creció desde mis temores y experiencias como mujer, que sintió dolor y desancilaje en las calles de Londres, en los pisos de olvidados vecinos del West London, en la seducción de los lugares que hoy ya no deseo recordar.

Vulnerable ante una violencia que no pude ni entender, ni controlar, simplemente pude, y ya es bastante, sufrirla y resistir.

Pues bien, heme aquí desprendida de todo cuanto parece necesario, siguiendo la senda que piso desde que viví en Londres: "la del despojo". Allí me despojaron de todo lo que una chica puede tener a los 21 años, para arrojarla después, como una colilla, en aquel pueblo de Beaconsfield. Aquella desgracia se convertiría en grandeza al comprender, años más tarde, que tal despojo material, físico y síquico me iba a servir para sacar a la luz un "yo" profundo -el que hoy me sustenta- un "yo" que sólo tiene el papel y la pluma como única posesión.

Tras aquel despojo no volví a Inglaterra. Frente a lo mucho que se me vino encima, al regresar a España con tan sólo 21 años, desnuda de alma y cuerpo, sólo al silencio tuve como aliado. Víctima entre millones de víctimas... al menos junto a mí siempre tuve la pluma, la mano que escribe, el papel y la esperanza.

Necesité mil días de oración y más de una dé-

cada para que el silencio dejara de ser tan evidente. Entonces apareció Sarah Kane con sus obras. Arrancada por ella, volví a Londres. Lo hice para asistir a un simposio sobre ella. Así, retomé contacto con la Inglaterra que fue verdugo para una parte de mi vida. De nuevo en Londres, las coincidencias se produjeron como una forma de sellar caminos, ya que me alojé en un hotel cerca de la fatídica parada del metro Gloucester. Claro que, nada más pisar el suelo inglés, vislumbré el esperado rescate que Kane me estaba brindando.

Estuve todo ese sábado, 11 de noviembre de 2006, en el Barbican Centre de Londres, en la City. Allí se celebró este simposio. De esta forma presencié los coloquios que el famoso escritor de teatro Mark Ravenhill, muy amigo de Sarah, había organizado. Diane Kent, Suzan Sylvester y David Toole, actores que habían representado sus obras cuando ella vivía, participaron también en el coloquio. Junto a ellos, pero en otro momento de la tarde, los académicos Don Rebellato, Dr. Graham Saunders y Aleks Sierz mostraron lo que conocían del teatro de Kane. Sin embargo, fue Mel Kennedy, su amiga y agente literaria, quien reflejó el lado más humano y artístico de Sarah. En este entorno de saber y buena organización, el toque de humor inglés lo pusieron las zapatillas de espar-

to que Mark Ravenhill llevaba puestas (sin calcetines) en esta tarde de noviembre. Sin pretenderlo, sus zapatillas nos ubicaron en el Londres de Francis Bacon -en el de la amorosidad- al menos en mis emociones del momento.

Luego vimos *Skin*, el único guión escrito por Kane para la televisión. En *Skin* se suaviza la agresividad de los *skin heads*. Hay algo de justificación hacia ellos en su relación contraria a los africanos (término ya sólo por el color de piel) pues los africanos nacidos en Europa también están perdiendo interés por la especie humana.

Al final de la tarde vimos "Blasted", su primera y exitosa obra. La vimos en alemán. El director, Thomas Ostermeier y los actores son alemanes. La traducción la había realizado Nils Tabert, otro intelectual alemán.

Tras tantos años sin pisar suelo inglés, todas mis emociones se volvieron a hacer una bomba de racimo en mi lengua. No pude hablar, ni acercarme a casi nadie. Un canto muy rodado me amordazaba la garganta, me golpeaba la mente. Pero pese a esto, estaba contenta, había conseguido ver por vez primera y en Londres, la polémica obra que la lanzó a la fama.

La puesta en escena de Thomas Ostermeier fue muy estilizada, tanto que incluso la crudeza ori-

ginal de texto de Kane perdió violencia. Pero al pulir "Blasted" como él lo hizo, nada se omitió, nada quedó sin decirse, en el aire. Todo se volvió de nuevo a encarnar en el escenario de forma magistral.

Thomas Ostermeier desde luego me impactó, no sólo por la dirección de la obra, sino por su intervención en el coloquio con todos los que conocieron a Kane. Ostermeier, un alemán como los que Adolf Hitler quería lanzar al mundo: alto, rubio, joven, atractivo, inteligente, con la excepción de su mirada, de sus palabras, de su pose en el coloquio... Ostermeier parecía un reclamo para la nueva Alemania, quería alzar el reconocimiento de la nueva Alemania hacia "la sangre limpia" como la suya, como la de otros muchos alemanes, tras más de tres generaciones del Holocausto. Sus manos no eran las que Paul Sartre tanto enfatizó "como sucias" en los alemanes, las manos de Thomas Ostermeier parecían levantarse y decir:

"AL FIN SANGRE LIMPIA"

Y así fue la dirección, la puesta en escena de "Blasted" como una "sangre limpia para Kane".

SARAH KANE SYMPOSIUM. LONDRES,  
11 DE NOVIEMBRE 2006. SANGRE  
LIMPIA PARA SARAH KANE

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robada, estrangulada, violada y asesinada. La gente se sentía hambrienta, enferma, aburrida, desesperada en la science et la culture 科学と文化 La scienza e la cultura gwyddoniaerh a gwrteithia

## ▶ TEATRO XXI

COORDINADO POR:  
ISABEL DELGADO

# SARAH KANE. *DIARIO DE ÉBOLI DE MER*\* (II)

FESTIVAL DE EDIMBURGO. AGOSTO 2008.

*DEPREDADORES EN KANE, BANDOLEROS DEL ALMA*

ASISTÍ A LA REPRESENTACIÓN DE *4.48 PSYCHOSIS* POR LA COMPAÑÍA POLACA DIRIGIDA POR TR. WARSZAWA. LA OBRA SE REPRESENTÓ EN EL KING'S THEATRE. LA ACTRIZ MAGDALENA CICLEKA GANÓ EL PREMIO A LA INTERPRETACIÓN EN ESTE FESTIVAL. SUS MENOS AMIGOS O MENOS CERCANOS DIJERON QUE PARA REPRESENTAR ESTAR DEPRIMIDA, COMO LA VOZ DE *4.48*, GRITABA DEMASIADO EN EL ESCENARIO. A MÍ ME ATRAPÓ TANTO QUE DE VUELTA AL HOTEL ME METÍ EN UNA IGLESIA ESCOCESA DONDE HABÍA UN CONCIERTO SACRO, PERO SÓLO PERMANECÍ EN LA ENTRADA, LEYENDO EL ARTÍCULO NÚMERO 5 DE LA DECLARACIÓN DE DERECHOS HUMANOS, (QUE HABÍA EN UNA EXPOSICIÓN CON DIBUJOS INFANTILES):

"NADIE TIENE DERECHO A HERIRNOS O TORTURARNOS".

LA OBRA REPRESENTADA POR MAGDALENA FUE COMO UN GRAN GRITO, QUE HACÍA REFERENCIA A ESTE DERECHO.

Si algo es el teatro de Kane es liberador. Yo hablo como público que ha leído su obra y comienza a verla representada en escena, donde debe ser. Su teatro es sanador, quizá porque a ella nadie pudo sanarla, o no les importó tanto, o no se dieron cuenta a tiempo. Es reparador de identidades perdidas, inestables. Es obra de arte, por encima de todo.

Cuando la actriz polaca dijo: *I love somebody who does not exist* y anhela el beso, el abrazo sin más, yo ya tenía en las monedas del 1 Ching los brazos de un bandolero esperando. Un abogado disfrazado de bandolero. Un comienzo y una continuación por el *dark side* que con tanta *crave* deseo olvidar y sin embargo dejaré plasmado aquí, pues a estas alturas de la investigación, el margen que me separa de Sarah es ya demasiado estrecho y a veces se diluye.

Kane descargaba sus culpas, adoptaba otras nuevas, se dejaba devorar por la culpa pasito a pasito, zancada a zancada. En ella todo este dolor se transformaba en arte teatral para donárnoslo. Así, la voz de *4.48* ha perdido todo contacto con el mundo tanto en culpa como en afectos, como en links o empalmes y por eso se suicida o busca el suicidio. Se anhela ver a Dios, pero a la vez tam-

poco se puede caminar en su búsqueda, porque la depresión está demasiado arraigada y se padece este estado. Un alma, una creencia deambulaba por el escenario, una víctima cuya sangre en las muñecas reclamaba un libertador. Pero eran los verdugos los que ocupaban la escena, esos verdugos que la vida siempre incorpora a todas las realidades personales.

Por esa generosidad que destacaba tanto en Kane, no hay casi reproches en el texto que nos dejó sobre *4.48*, no hay casi egoísmo en la voz enferma, en las voces que aparecen. En la protagonista polaca sucedía lo mismo, salvo en la representación de los tratamientos psiquiátricos y de cómo era acogida, cuando ella ya había atravesado los límites de lo humano en un suicidio no consumado. En esta representación polaca había sexualidad, pero vivida desde la tragedia con su amante bisexual.

Como Kane, como la protagonista de *4.48* deambulé por Edimburgo sin escudos. La culpa diluída en el cuerpo, depredadores en Kane, bandoleros del alma. Cuando se vio la fisura, atacó el animal.

El sábado 16 de agosto 2008 asistí a la representación de *4.48* por segunda vez, pero en esta oca-

sión acompañada por mi amiga de Dublín, Caroline O'Connor. Mientras escribo esto que voy entresacando de mis diarios, aparecen trozos como "Ha aflorado mi lado oscuro aquí... Aflora como uno es y no es, y lo que pasa en este contraste de oscuros y luces... pero hay que ser más humano y liberar al mundo mucho más, perdonándose uno mismo, aceptándose... Nunca se deja de aprender."

La urraca anunciadora estaba allí, a la salida del teatro, tras la representación. Anunciaba como presagio etrusco nuestra noche de sábado en Edimburgo -hombres invadiéndonos. Amantes portuarios que como siempre deseaban besar y marcharse. Pensando que tocaba espiritualidad al pisar tierra escocesa y ver esta obra, me vendí al primer abrazo de afecto y enseñé la verja no existente de mi intimidad. Me expuse a la muerte sin caer, como un torero, cuya capa era la imagen imborrable de *4.48* y el efecto especial de los números cayendo del cielo, pronunciados lentamente como Kane los escribió: 100, 84, 91, 72, 81, 69, 58... 7// 100, 93, 86... 23, 16, 9, 2.

Edimburgo se fue quedando lejos. A Kane le gustaba mucho esta ciudad y por supuesto el festival de teatro. Pero también conoció a los bandoleros al vuelo de la noche loca o descontrola-

da en parte. Bandoleros que rasuraban el karma, que dañaban, que siguen rasurando, dañando... No era eso lo que ella quería. Ella quería cubrir su soledad sin dañarse, pero nunca lo logró.

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En el Festival Alternativo (Fringe Festival) vi representada *Crave* el 17 de agosto, por un grupo de la universidad de Birmingham. La gelatina roja cubría la escena, se bañaban en gelatina los cuatro actores: A, B, C, M. Se acariciaban a sí mismos con las manos manchadas de gelatina en colores. Se desconocían, se ignoraban, pero toda la obra guardaba este sueño: *If love would come* (Si el amor viniera). El recuerdo del idioma polaco en *4.48* dominaba demasiado mi mente todavía y asistí a la representación como el que camina incorporando una cicatriz más... *Si el amor viniera*.

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ti-oka. (...) Luego de haber hablado con sencillez, Okoye expresó la media docena de frases siguientes en znanost pa kultura wetenschap en cultuur science and culture znanje i kultura

## ► TEATRO XXI

COORDINADO POR:  
ISABEL DELGADO

# VIAJANDO AL LADO DE SARAH KANE. DIARIO DE ÉBOLI DE MER (III)

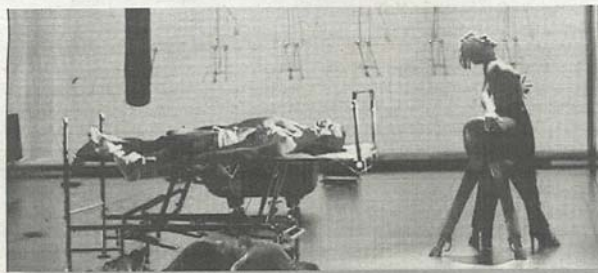
*PURIFICADOS (CLEANSED). OPORTO, diciembre 2008. MÁSCARAS, DOMA DE GUSANOS BÍBLICOS EN KANE*

REANUDAMOS LA ENTREGA DE ARTÍCULOS DE LA FILÓLOGA Y ESPECIALISTA DE SARAH KANE, ÉBOLI DE MER. UN DIARIO PERSONAL DE IMPRESIONES Y COMENTARIOS SOBRE LA VIDA, LA OBRA Y LAS ESCENIFICACIONES DE LOS TEXTOS DE UNA AUTORA CLAVE DEL TEATRO BRITÁNICO CONTEMPORÁNEO.

Hay unas reglas, un sistema que aceptar; si encajas, si te adaptas a ello, eres normal, eres persona. Todo conocimiento se reduce a aprenderse un catálogo. Toda participación en el mundo laboral exige aprenderse un catálogo, algo fijo. Hasta escribir puede ser un catálogo de normas con espacios vacíos para rellenar. *Cleansed* es un intento de transgresión sobre estas reglas, sobre el sistema que debemos aceptar.

Son muchos y muy llamativos los aspectos transgresores de la obra *Purificados*, pero quizá el más sorprendente sea la quema de libros, no de los catálogos referidos a dichos libros. Y sorprende porque en ese perímetro carcelario, espacio de la obra, cuando todo se transgrede, todo se purifica. Sin embargo, la quema de libros sigue siendo un misterio sin reflejo de la búsqueda purificación, puesto que Sarah era una gran lectora, y el sistema académico inglés, era para ella, pese a haber adquirido buenas calificaciones, un catálogo más de nombres y fechas, de enumeración de datos que ahogan, que matan a todo posible escritor...

Han pasado varios meses desde que vi representada *Cleansed* en Oporto, en el teatro de Sao João. Me recuerdo a mí misma en la ciudad como una oca del Camino de Santiago, que se cruza con aves de paso. Estas Aves de Paso se alojaron en mi mismo hotel. Llegaron y representaron *Cleansed* durante dos días. Así comenzó el simbolismo oculto de los pájaros sobre el Duero navegable, pues viví *Cleansed* en la representación del teatro, y en el hotel con los actores y el director: Krzysztof Warlikowski. Las ocas recorren el Camino, son consideradas aves espirituales y sobre todo fieles. Algunas veces se unen a otros pájaros, coinciden con ellos. Krzysztof Warli-



kowski, "el gran Warlikowski", el hombre que habla de Madrid en términos de alejamiento cultural del resto de Europa, sin haber superado el franquismo, había transgredido la obra, ya que introdujo la declaración de amor de la voz A en *Crave* al principio de la representación. Simon Kane, el hermano de Sarah que cuida sus obras, no estaba de acuerdo en la transgresión, y tuvieron problemas con él, pero al final Krzysztof consiguió su propósito.

Durante dos días fui parte de la compañía polaca, al menos en mi corazón, tan ávido de otredad en un país como Portugal. Oporto es una ciudad sin desasosiego, aunque su dulce vino fue el veneno que acabó con la vida de Pessoa, es sobre todo el mejor lugar para representar *Cleansed*. Esta colonia de pájaros con un mismo ala, Warlikowski, es el culmen de la belleza sobre un escenario, pues Kane se hace vida en el instante orgásmico cuando, bajo unos logrados efectos especiales, los narcisos brotan en el aire del telón subido.

KRZYSZTOF WARLIKOWSKI ES UNA DE LAS VOCES MÁS SINGULARES DEL TEATRO EUROPEO CONTEMPORÁNEO. DIRECTOR POLACO, SE FORMÓ ENTRE SU PAÍS DE ORIGEN Y FRANCIA. TRABAJÓ CON PETER BROOK Y ESTUDIÓ CON KRISTIAN LUPA, BERGMAN Y STREHLER. ES VISTANTE ASIDUO DE SHAKESPEARE, HA EXPERIMENTADO CON EURÍPIDES Y SÓFOCLES, PERO TAMBIÉN CON KOLTÉS O, COMO EN *CLEANSSED*, CON SARAH KANE.

Warlikowski y su máscara bíblica por excelencia, supieron conjugar muy bien en esta representación la transgresión y posterior purificación. Tanta transgresión sexual y emocional desembocando en un río, en el más purificado de todos.

Mientras pienso en todos estos actores, tan diferentes todos ellos, tan polifacéticos, con vidas tan extremas, como la de Jasek Poniedzialek-Rod, el homosexual que lleva el control de su

relación con Carl, papel interpretado por el actor alemán Thomas Scheibner, cuyos pies se anclan en la ciudad de Pisa.

Recuerdo a la vez los subtítulos de la obra en portugués como "lágrimas geladas", el texto hablado en polaco y en mi mente el inglés directo que leo y releo en Kane. Entonces, como nunca antes, un ala de universalidad crece en el paisaje que mis ojos vieron en esta ribera del Duero, donde las gaviotas de nuevo traían tanta paz y serenidad a mi corazón. Y vuelvo a pensar en Pessoa, en los grandes de la literatura que siempre han sido aficionados a la meditación, al vino de Oporto y otros vinos de etiquetas diferentes, que hacen aflorar nuestros lados más oscuros, étlicos, que acabaron con Pessoa y sin duda con nuestra Sarah.

Warlikowski se va alejando de la onda que pisamos juntos en un breve instante, aquél en el que nos miramos entendiendo cuándo el gusano del Carnaval crece, asoma, pide domesticación. Desde entonces también mi yo se sigue mutando en oca, vuelo hacia azul en horizontal. Me sigo uniendo a otras aves de paso, aprendiendo de ellas, de su vuelo. Warlikowski y yo aprendimos a través de *Cleansed* la doma del gusano, la transgresión que purifica, mutilando un trocito del alma, que yo busqué ver en él, en su oposición arrogante hacia mí.

Una vez más Kane nos enseñó que sólo nos queda domesticar al maldito gusano bíblico para purificarnos.

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Estas palabras están dedicadas a la restricción del actor Jasek Poniedzialek, estrella televisiva en Polonia, transgresor purificado, traductor de la obra al idioma polaco.



lada a los 9 años / y la empleadita de tienda que a los 16 se había querido matar / y que ahora se presenta  
la science et la culture 科学と文化 La scienza e la cultura gwyddoniaeth a gwrteithia

► **TEATRO XXI**

COORDINADO POR:  
ISABEL DELGADO

# VIAJANDO AL LADO DE SARAH KANE. *DIARIO DE ÉBOLI DE MER*\* (IV)

MARE NOSTRUM, 21 de marzo 2009.  
ÚLTIMOS DÍAS DE SARAH KANE

ÉBOLI DE MER (\*) NOS ENTREGA OTRO CAPÍTULO DE SU DIARIO DE IMPRESIONES Y COMENTARIOS SOBRE LA VIDA Y LA OBRA DE UNA AUTORA CLAVE DEL TEATRO BRITÁNICO CONTEMPORÁNEO, SARAH KANE. ESTE AÑO SE CUMPLEN 10 AÑOS SU MUERTE.

I.D.C.

Tuve que ir a Benidorm y estrellarme con mi lado más oscuro, para entender los últimos días de Sarah Kane en el hospital londinense de King's College. Tuve que pisar la arena de la playa para toparme con aquellos médicos y enfermeras que "cuidaron" sus últimos días. Me tuve que topar con las cintas de sujeción, las guardas en el lenguaje médico, que ataron sus brazos, su cuerpo, sus piernas a la cama. Me tuve que topar con más de los 90 minutos que estubo sola en una fría habitación de hospital. Me tuve que topar con todo lo que rodeó a Kane en sus últimas horas. Y desde esta metáfora que me unirá de por vida a los últimos días de Kane, me he quedado sin fuerzas, sin resistencia. Masoquismo infinito, atroz, no narrable. En el proceso hasta llegar aquí, he visto lo que pasó por su mente, por su vida, lo que pasó cuando se sajó las muñecas. Porque sé la clase de inestabilidad afectiva que rodeó toda su vida... Lo sé, lo sé... y en el conocimiento me he topado con la soledad más grande, más fuerte, más dolorosa... En este triste hallazgo me he purificado, pero a la vez he visto el gran muro del horror que provoca estar desancado en la vida. Desde ese día trato más que nunca de aferrarme a un Dios al que quiero tocar y anhelo tanto su abrazo que sé cuándo los suicidios son buscados, o son indirectos. Lo sé. Sin embargo, el saberlo no me hace más feliz, sino más frágil por estar más próxima a Kane y entender cómo se nos fue una vida, un corazón tan lleno de amor como era el suyo... En la transgresión

me he purificado, como un personaje de *Cleansed*, pero no toco el abrazo de Dios... Sigo siendo el bounty a la deriva más cortesana de todos los destinos.

*Dedicado al Dr. Unai, psiquiatra que supo acariciar la visión de Sarah Kane.*

\* \* \*

## CHINCHÓN -AUTO SACRAMENTAL "LA PASIÓN" - Sábado Santo, 2009. LOS VERDUGOS DE KANE

Cuando colgaban al Cristo viviente (un actor no profesional del pueblo de Chinchón), yo estaba en la plaza del pueblo junto a Christopher, un inglés que sacaba fotos compulsivamente. Al colgarle y entre los aplausos del público, se oyó una voz que decía:

"Fue más allá del perdón  
hacia sus verdugos, les amó."

Cuando oí la palabra verdugo no pude evitar la asociación al título de mi tesis sobre Kane ("Victimas, verdugos y libertadores en la obra de Sarah Kane"). "Perdonar a los verdugos" comenzó a dar vueltas sin parar en mi cerebro. En ese momento entendí por qué elegí a Kane. Por qué toda su obra era moralidad, influencia bíblica indirecta... Lo entendí en el centro mismo de la plaza, observando el espectáculo teatral donde un Cristo vivien-



SARAH KANE.

de Kane y me atreví a poner frente por frente, cara a cara la imagen de Kane colgada en el hospital con los cordones de sus playeras, y la imagen de este Cristo vivo, cuyo simulacro de muerte se vive tan gozosamente en Chinchón, todos los años por Semana Santa. Me brotó una lágrima que dolía demasiado al caer por mi mejilla, como una navaja recién pasada por el fuego. Conseguí anotar en mi libreta este final del Auto:

"Perdónales porque no saben lo que hacen".

Conseguí anotar estas palabras sobre Kane:  
"Me voy a detener Kane, no puedo más... *quiero vivir sin ti... o con tu vida en heroicidad... o en algo...*"

Encadené esta oración:

"En tus manos encomiendo mi espíritu porque mi cuerpo reclama un ancla de otredad, de espacio en el mundo.

Pero no llega.

Y quiero vivir.

Y morir de muerte natural.

¿Quizás esto es pedir mucho?"

te era colgado. Sin miedo, sin tambalearme, firme y humilde a la vez, vi de nuevo mi desancaje del mundo. Los pasos de Cristo en un mundo tan materialista no son más que un suicidio indirecto... En ese momento también vi el suicidio directo

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*vi las muchedumbres de América, vi una plateada telaraña en el centro de una negra pirámide, vi*  
*znanoost pa kultura wetenschap en cultuur science and culture znanyé i kultura*

## ► NUEVAS DRAMATURGIAS

COORDINADO POR:  
ISABEL DELGADO

# V. CHINCHÓN. SÁBADO SANTO, 2009: AUTO SACRAMENTAL LA PASIÓN. LOS VERDUGOS DE KANE

Cuando colgaban al Cristo viviente (un actor no profesional del pueblo de Chinchón), yo estaba en la plaza del pueblo junto a Christopher, un inglés que sacaba fotos compulsivamente. Al colgarle y entre los aplausos del público, se oyó una voz que decía:

"Fue más allá del perdón  
hacia sus verdugos, les amó."

Cuando oí la palabra verdugo no pude evitar la asociación al título de mi tesis sobre Kane (*Victimas, verdugos y libertadores en la obra de...*). "Perdonar a los verdugos" comenzó a dar vueltas sin parar en mi cerebro. En ese momento entendí por qué elegí a Kane. Por qué toda su obra era moralidad, influencia bíblica indirecta... Lo entendí en el centro mismo de la plaza, observando el espectáculo teatral donde un Cristo viviente era colgado. Sin miedo, sin tambalearme, firme y humilde a la vez, vi de nuevo mi desancaje del mundo. Los pasos de Cristo en un mundo tan materialista no son más que un suicidio indirecto... En ese momento también vi el suicidio directo de Kane y me atreví a poner frente por frente, cara a cara la imagen de Kane colgada en el

"Perdónales porque no saben lo que hacen".  
Conseguí anotar estas palabras sobre Kane:  
"Me voy a detener Kane, no puedo más... quiero vivir sin ti... o con tu vida en heroicidad... o en algo..."

Encadené esta oración:  
"En tus manos encomiendo mi espíritu  
porque mi cuerpo reclama un ancla de otredad,

de espacio en el mundo.

Pero no llega.

Y quiero vivir.

Y morir de muerte natural.

¿Quizás esto es pedir mucho?"

## VI. EPÍLOGO ACADÉMICO SOBRE SARAH KANE

Kane va más allá de la tortura en sí. Ella establece un diálogo (libertador, por medio de un lenguaje muy poético) entre el verdugo y su víctima. A través de sus propias palabras, conocemos los dos lados de la ecuación, o los dos bandos. Es a través de esa indagación psicológica donde Kane

expone los principales ejes temáticos en todas sus obras. Pero los crímenes que hacen del abuso en nuestra cultura de *Shopping and Fucking* no cuentan.

\*\*\*\*\* Por eso hay que seguir yendo al teatro, allí se imparte justicia. Hay que ir al teatro para cumplir el mayor deseo de Sarah Kane: "LLENAR LOS TEATROS COMO ESTADIOS DE FÚTBOL" \*\*\*\*\*

## VII. MISMIADAD DISUELTA: 4.48 PSYCHOSIS

En esta obra de Sarah Kane se emborrona el límite, la frontera entre "chica buena" y "chica mala", para emerger una nueva chica espejo de un proceso de victimización, bajo la forma artística que puede definirse, en esta como en el resto de las obras de Kane, como "un teatro de obscenidad femenina" con muchos matices sobre la masculinidad y el discurso emergente con mucha fuerza sobre homosexualidad, tanto masculina como femenina.

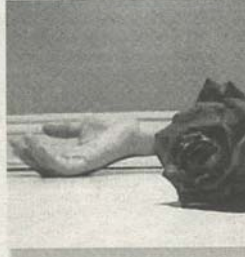
El erotismo de sus obras es una manifestación pornográfica sin ofensa, sin lugar en el mercado, ya que expresa el dolor de la víctima, y no el placer masoquista. Una violencia que reclama un auditorio con un halo de acusados, sin más intención punitiva que reconocer en el escenario lo que vemos u oímos. Hay visibilidad en la sexualidad, presencia dependiendo de quién dirija la obra o de quién la interprete. Kane no dejó nada escrito al respecto. La técnica de la caída del carácter, de la fracturación del yo rodea toda la representación visual o feldia. Aquí el personaje se ha demolido sin ansiedad, desesperanza o satisfacción como en Pirandello, Beckett o Brecht. Se ha evaporado porque no tiene identidad, la ha perdido y desde la pérdida se construye el texto, porque la enfermedad mental, la depresión, es una carencia de identidad.

17 de septiembre 2008, Bristol,  
Biblioteca de Humanidades.

^ *Comprar y Follar*, obra escrita por Mark Ravenhill.



EL CENTRO. SARAH KANE Y MONTAJE  
DE SUS OBRAS.



hospital con los cordones de sus playeras, y la imagen de este Cristo vivo, cuyo simulacro de muerte se vive tan gozosamente en Chinchón, todos los años por Semana Santa. Me brotó una lágrima que dolía demasiado al caer por mi mejilla, como una navaja recién pasada por el fuego. Conseguí anotar en mi libreta este final del Auto:

ne trata de comprender por qué suceden estas cosas tan terribles.

La idea central de Kane es que la violencia destruye no solamente al receptor de la misma sino al ejecutor, al verdugo, y por tanto todos somos víctimas.

El abuso sexual y psicológico es uno de los prin-

## ***2. Matrices***



**barbican**

**PIT THEATRE, Level -2**  
 BITE:06  
 Sarah Kane Symposium

Saturday 11 Nov 2006 3:00 pm  
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**barbican**

**Barbican Theatre**  
 BITE:06  
 Zerbombt - Blasted  
 by Sarah Kane  
 Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz, Berlin

Saturday 11 Nov 2006 7:45 pm  
**£16.00** STA  
**Stalls** theatre right G3  
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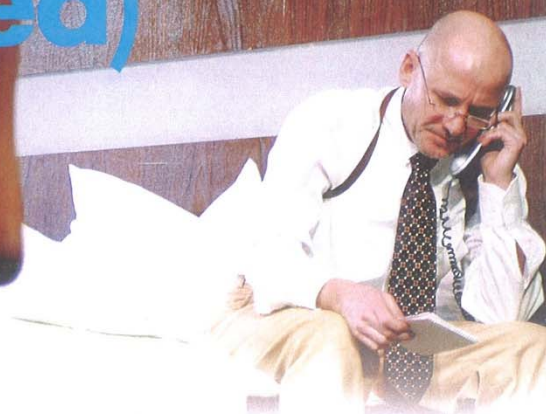
barbican

something different

Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz, Berlin

# Zerbombt (Blasted)

By Sarah Kane



programme

dance  
music  
theatre

# bite06

Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz, Berlin

# Zerbombt (Blasted)

By Sarah Kane

Directed by Thomas Ostermeier

Translated by Nils Tabert







**'This Zerbombt is true to Kane's vision and should convince even the most hardened sceptic that she wrote a play to last.'**

**Financial Times**



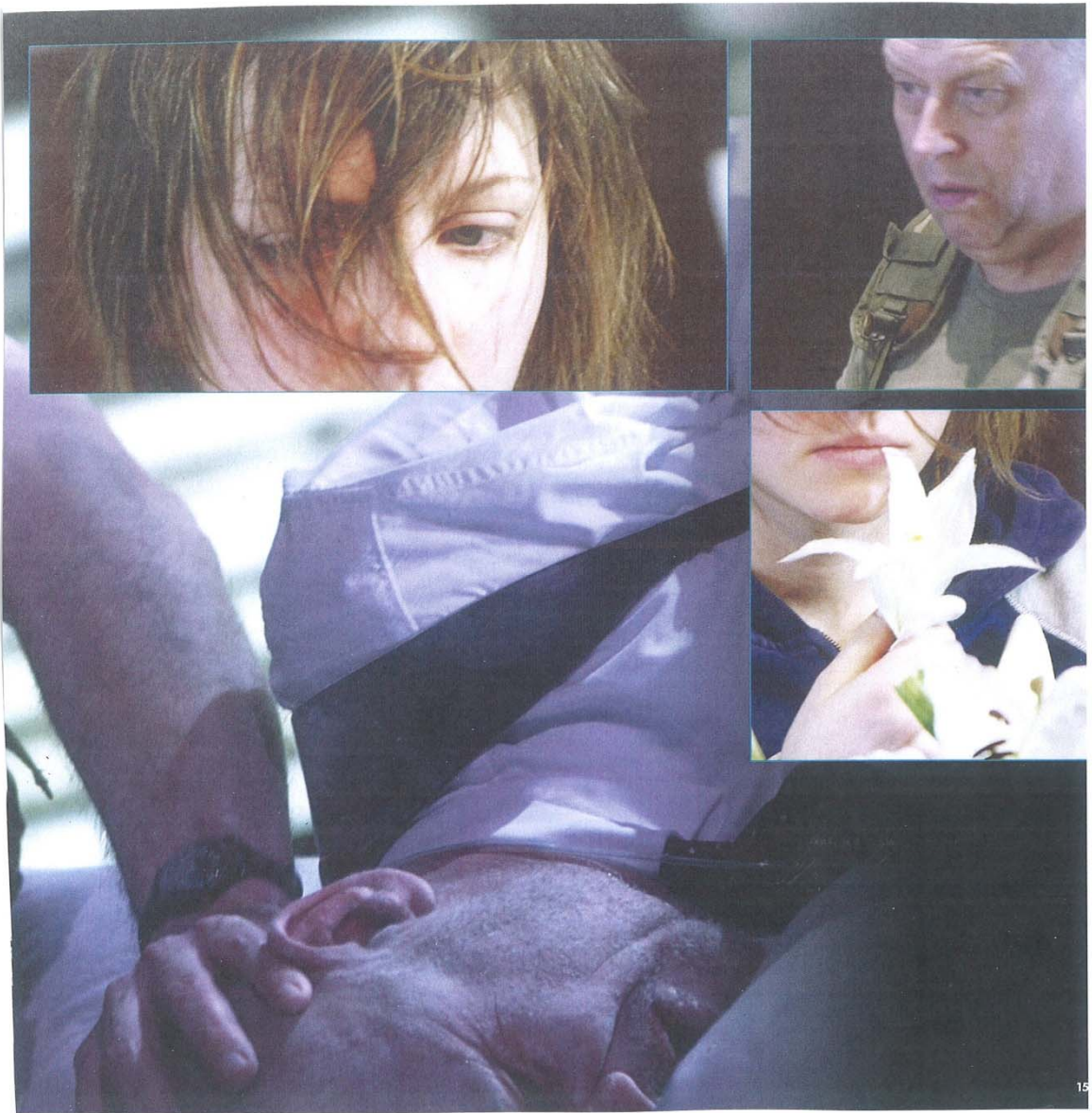
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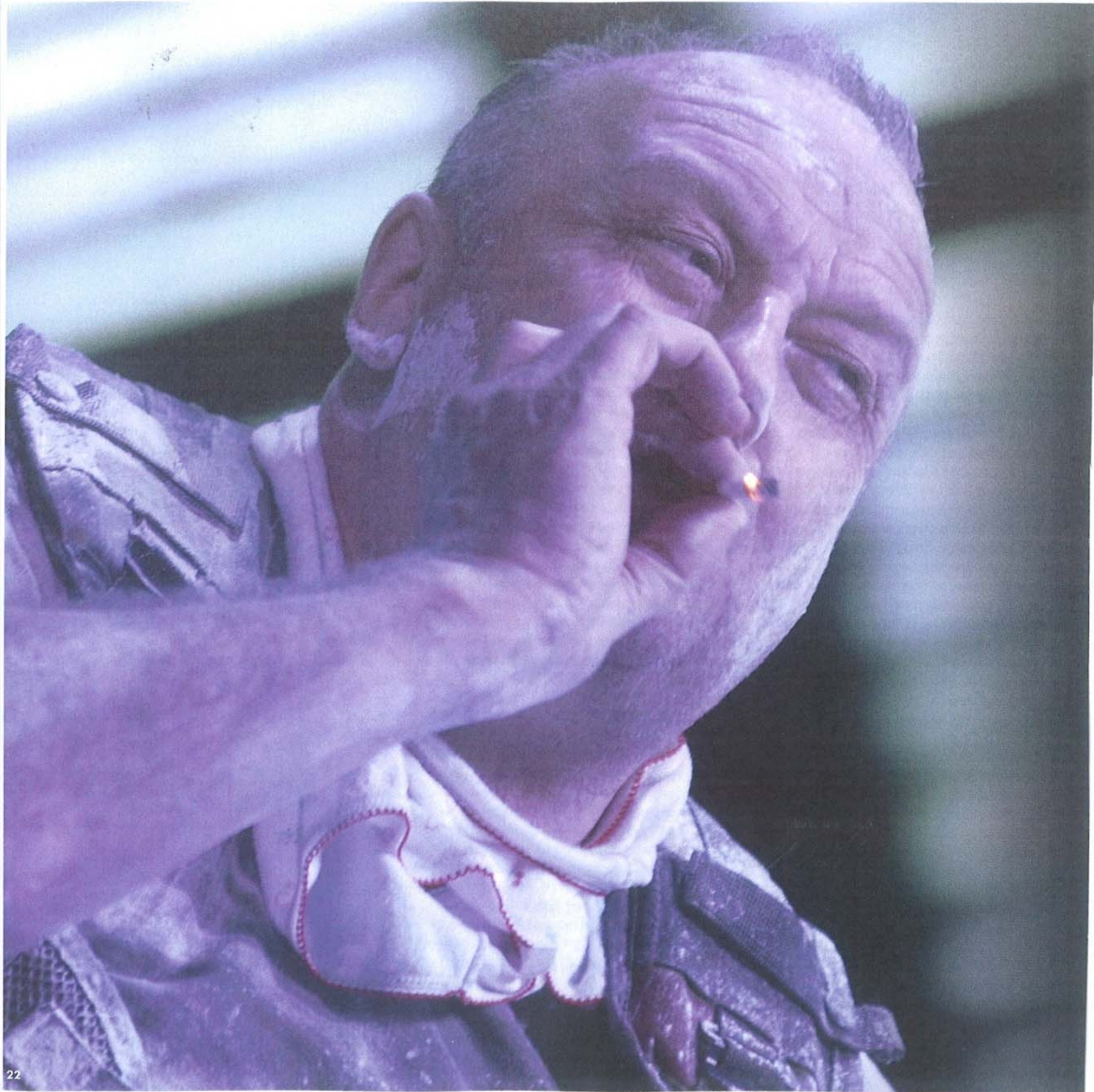


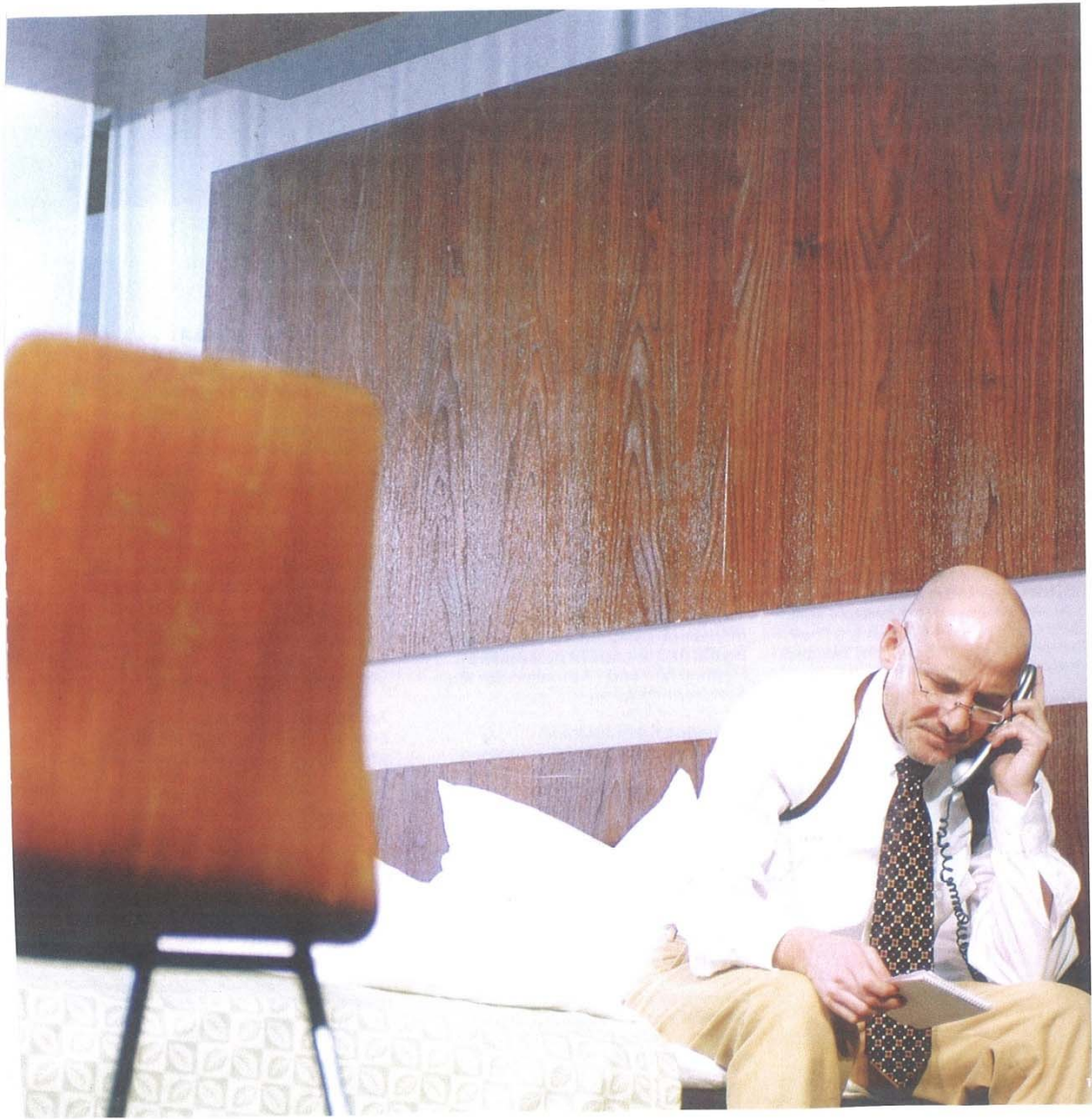
















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**4.48 Psychosis**  
by Sarah Kane  
TR Warszawa  
Performed in Polish with English supertitles  
Supported by the Ministry of Culture and  
National Heritage of the Republic of Poland

Friday 15 August 08 8:00pm  
**KING'S THEATRE**

AREA ROW SEAT  
Grand Circle F 21

£25.00 Full Price  
Transaction number: 652842  
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4.48 Psychosis  
King's Theatre  
15/08/08  
Grand Circle F 21  
25.00  
652842  
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EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL 2008  
**4.48 Psychosis**  
by Sarah Kane  
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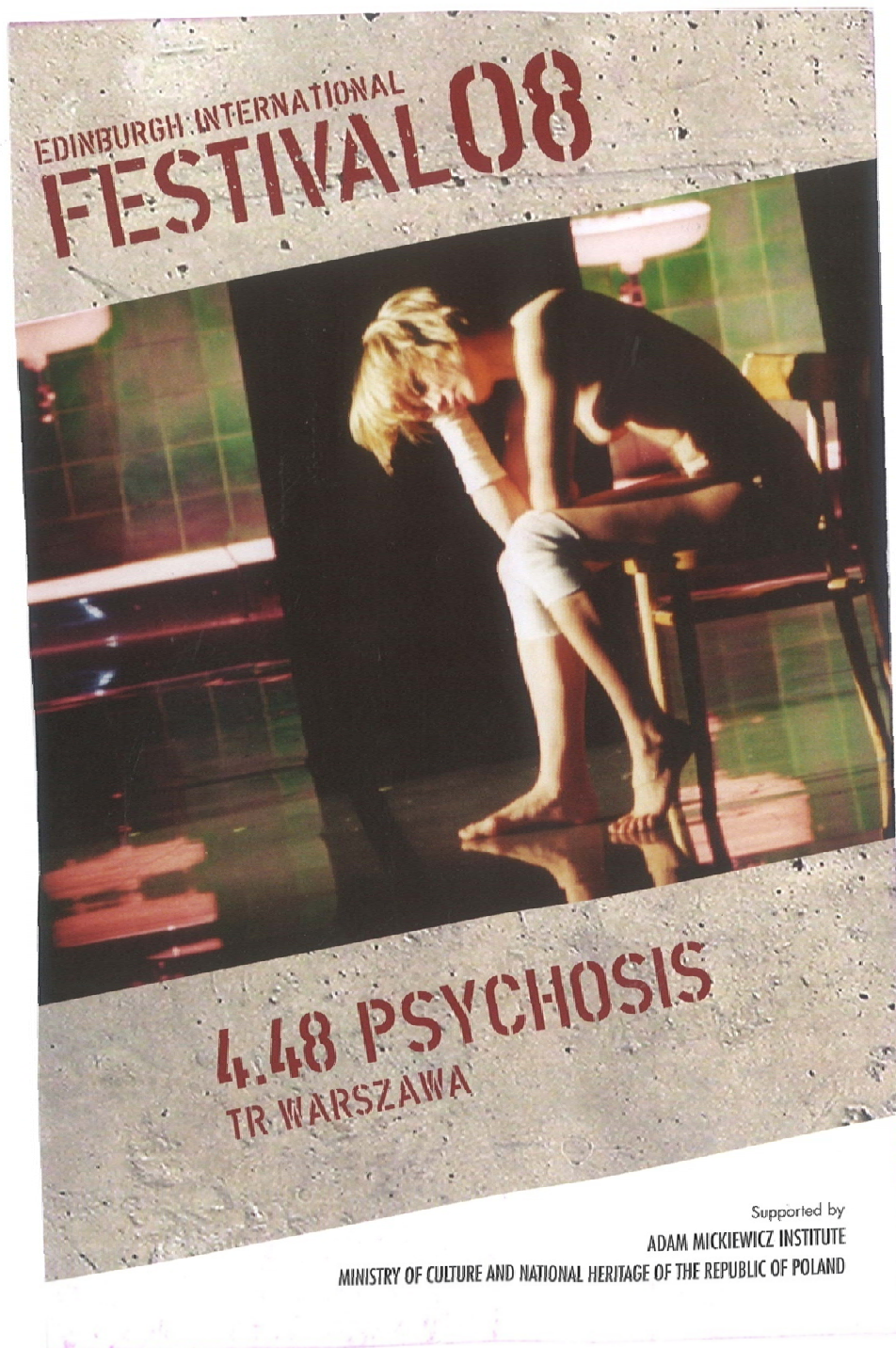
Saturday 16 August 08 8:00pm  
**KING'S THEATRE**

AREA ROW SEAT  
Stalls E 20

£20.00 Full Price  
Transaction number: 652846  
TICKETS ARE PURCHASED SUBJECT TO THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS ON REVERSE

4.48 Psychosis  
King's Theatre  
16/08/08  
Stalls E 20  
20.00  
652846  
HUB TICKETS 0131 473 2000





# EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL 08

presents

## 4.48 PSYCHOSIS

Sarah Kane

Performed in Polish with English supertitles

Translated by Klaudyna Rozhin

TR Warszawa

Supported by

MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND NATIONAL HERITAGE OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND

This production is proudly supported by the

**ADAM MICKIEWICZ INSTITUTE**

in preparation for the Polish Season in the UK, 2009–10



King's Theatre

Friday 15 — Sunday 17 August 8.00pm

The performance lasts approximately an hour with no interval.

The use of cameras, video and tape recorders is forbidden.

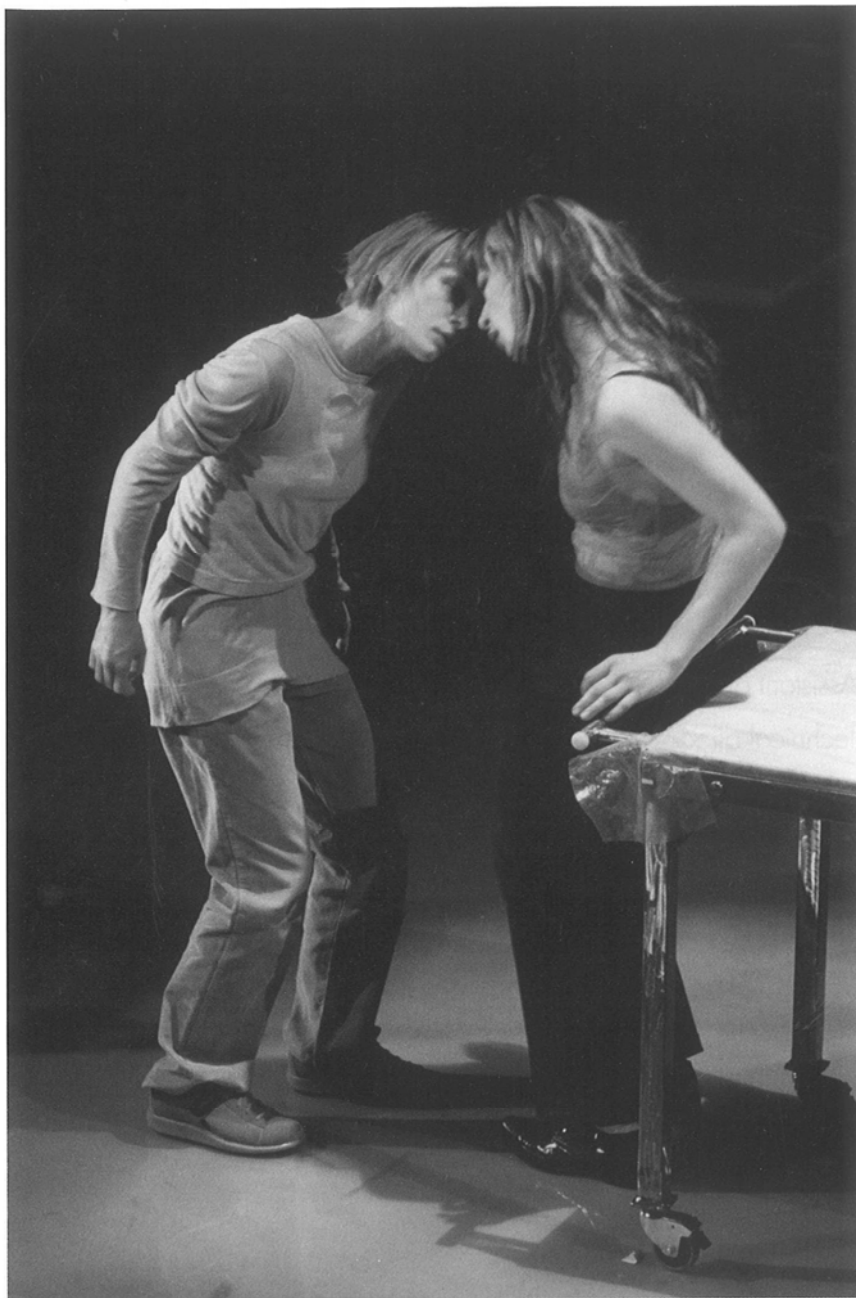
Please ensure that all mobile phones and electronic devices are switched off.

## 4.48 PSYCHOSIS

### Cast

Magdalena Cielecka, Katarzyna Herman, Mariusz Benoit,  
Rafał Maćkowiak, Janusz Chabior, Teresa Owczynnikow,  
Julia Kosińska

Translation	Klaudyna Rozhin
Direction	+ (Grzegorz Jarzyna)
Set design	Małgorzata Szczęśniak
Music	Piotr Domiński, Paweł Mykietyń, +
Lighting design	Felice Ross
Projection	Marcin Wiktorowski
Assistant director	Paweł Kulka
Technical director	Paweł Kamionka
Sound designer	Piotr Domiński
Brigadier	Andrzej Tuszewicz
Lights	Dariusz Adamski, Krzysztof Krawczyński
Set builders	Karol Korytko, Tadeusz Tomaszewski
Makeup	Monika Fetela
Wardrobe	Elżbieta Kołtonowicz, Ewa Sokołowska





In recent years Jarzyna has emulated the most fashionable British directors and staged performances in such spaces as a room in a railway station and an old factory. He has an eye for the classics, too, even if his treatments of *Hamlet* and *Don Giovanni* have been less than reverential of the text. It is a balance of interests that brings the best out of Sarah Kane's play: a sensitivity to the tormented mind of a suicidal woman and a fearlessness in showing her cruellest moments of despair.

'I usually use a lot of music, light, decoration and movement in my productions', he says. 'I'm an extravagant director. I like the intensity of the theatre. But for me *4:48 Psychosis* is very pure and clean. After the opening some people asked what had happened to me and why the production was so ironed out; but this subject is too fragile for an elaborate kind of treatment.'

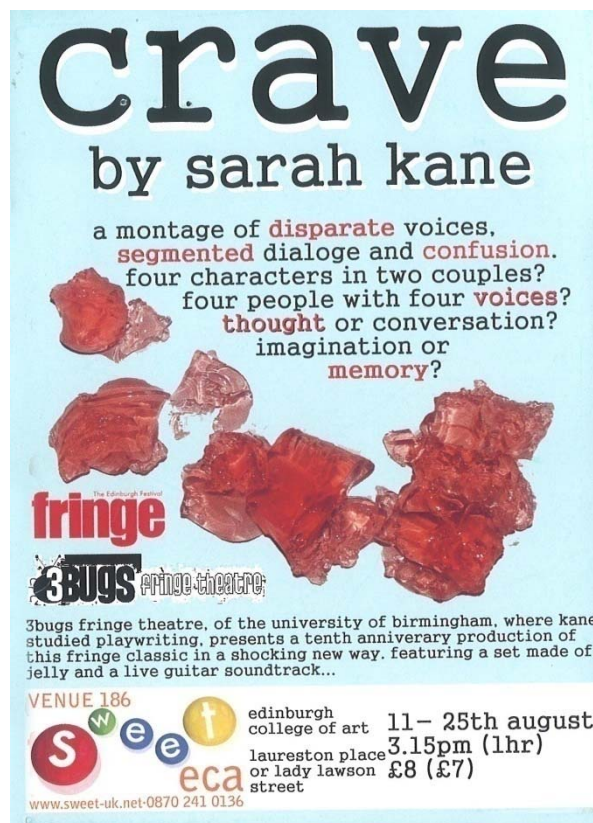
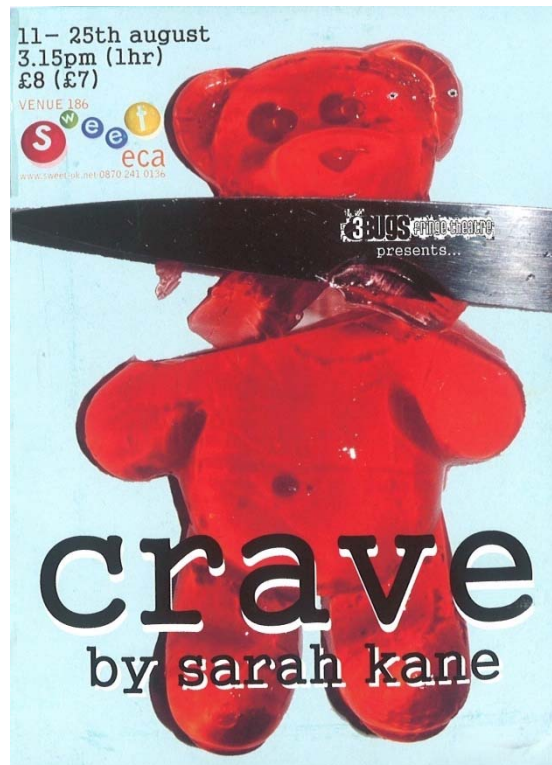
© Mark Fisher

*Mark Fisher is a freelance writer*









**'crave' by sarah kane**

3bugs fringe theatre,  
of the university of birmingham

a—danny wilkins  
b—daniel marchese robinson  
c—katherine lunney  
m—rose bryant

directed by daniel pitt

sound by paul williams

produced by daniel pitt and daniel  
marchese robinson

thanks are due to the 3bugs committee,  
the staff at sweet, and everyone in the  
audiences!

Sweet ECA  
UPSTAIRS

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'Crave' by Sarah Kane

3bugs fringe theatre

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experiência, porque é vida, afinal!»

um sofrimento que é também redenção, porque é

estarmos juntos, pudesse nascer a luz equívoca de

da profunda treva, do inferno que construímos ao

solidão, da tristeza, do abandono. Como se apenas

transforma-se aqui numa alegoria cristã da

no seu percurso que lhe assume a identidade –

perda do irmão investindo-se tão radicalmente a

história de Grace. **Purificados** – a

de exploração global do mundo. **Purificados** – a

para uma instância maior, para uma tentativa

na transposição de cada fragmento de realidade

que é único no seu trabalho deve ser procurado

conduz a momentos de puro delírio teatral, aquilo

uma na economia global do drama, o que aliás nos

detalhe de cada personagem e o peso de cada

entre psicologia e metáfora. Se lhe interessa o

trabalho de encenação num confronto improvável

direcção de actores, Warlikowski funda o seu

agora nos é dado ver **Sarah Kane**. Exímio na

Eurípidas e Sófocles, mas exerce Koltes ou, como

é visitante assíduo de Shakespeare, experimentou

estudou com Krystian Lupu, Bergman e Strindberg,

pais de origem e a França, trabalhou com Brook e

Encenador polaco, dividiu a sua formação entre o

singulares do teatro europeu contemporâneo.

**Krzysztof Warlikowski** é uma das vozes mais

## temporada internacionaltemporada internacional

**ROBIN** Se pudesses mudar uma coisa na tua vida  
o que é que mudavas?

**GRACE** À minha vida.

**ROBIN** Não, uma coisa na vida.

**GRACE** Não sei.

**ROBIN** Não, diz uma coisa.

**GRACE** Há muito por onde escolher.

**ROBIN/GRAHAM** Mas escolhe.

**GRACE** Isto é de loucos.

**ROBIN** Não querias o teu irmão de volta?

**GRACE** O quê?

**ROBIN** Não querias que o Graham estivesse vivo?

**GRAHAM/GRACE** (Riem.)

**GRACE** Não. Não.

Não acho que o Graham esteja morto.

Não é assim que eu penso nele.

**ROBIN** Acreditas no Céu?

**GRACE** Não, de maneira nenhuma.

**ROBIN** Não acreditas no Céu não acreditas no Inferno.

**GRACE** Não consigo ver o Céu.

**SARAH KANE - Purificados**

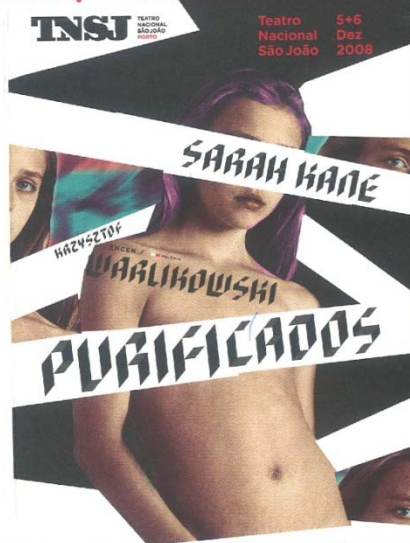
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coprodução Teatr Współczesny (Polónia), Teatr Polski (Polónia)  
escritor (libretto) Wroclawski Teatr Współczesny (Polónia)

Fabian Włodarek (músico)  
Tomasz Trybik, Renata Jett (monólogos, canções),  
Jacek Poniedziałek, Thomas Schreiber,  
Magdalena Kijak, Stanisław Cichosz,  
Magdalena Kijak, Stanisław Cichosz,  
interpretação Marcin Bonaszewski,  
Krzysztof Warlikowski

voz Renata Jett

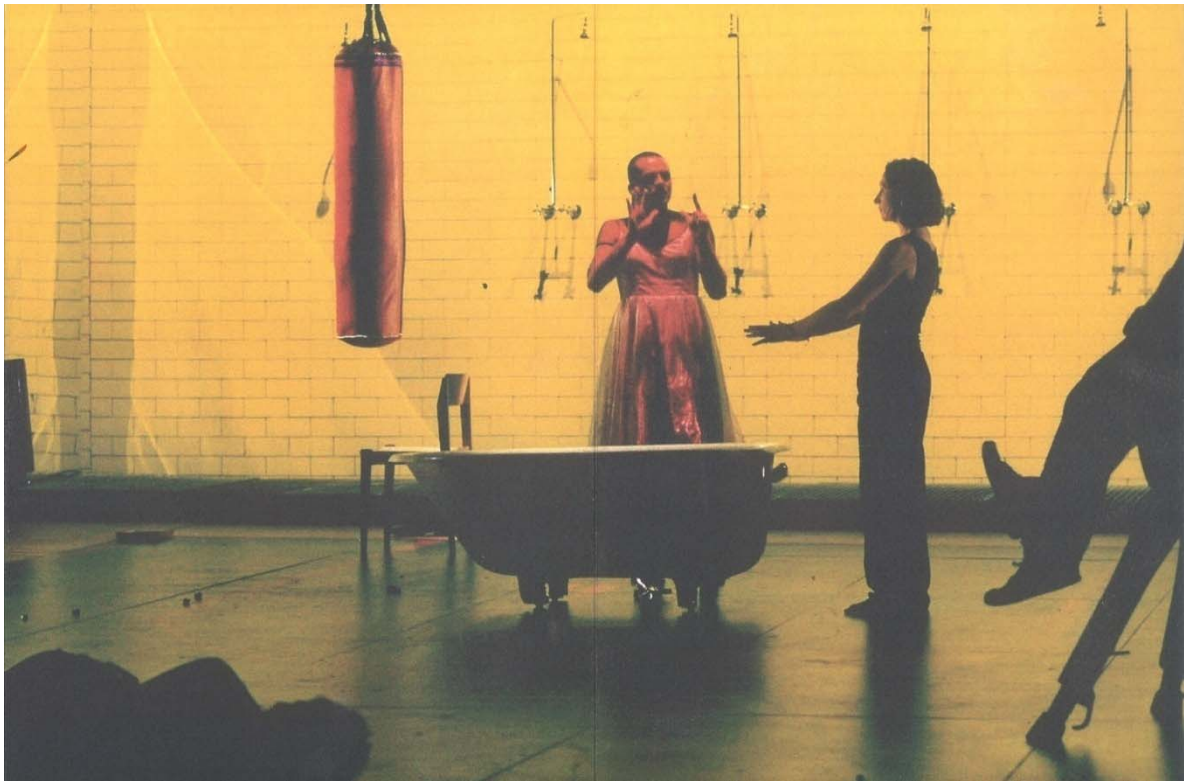
cenografia Marcin Bonaszewski  
música Marcin Bonaszewski  
cenografia Marcin Bonaszewski

Krzysztof Warlikowski, Jacek Poniedziałek  
tradução para polaco  
de Sarah Kane  
Oczyszczeni

**PURIFICADOS**

Teatro Nacional  
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Dez  
2008





## Redenção, castigo, ressurreição

Entrevista com KRZYSZTOF WARLIKOWSKI\*

JOËLLE GAYOT *Purificados* é um texto de uma violência extrema. Em que estado de espírito abordou esta encenação?

KRZYSZTOF WARLIKOWSKI O primeiro imperativo era tornar-me de actores que conheço muito bem, que me conhecem e que têm confiança em mim. Trabalhar com desconhecidos estava fora de questão. Durante mais de dois meses, eu e os actores avançamos neste texto que exige um investimento fora do comum. Quando Sarah Kane escreve *Purificados*, temos a impressão de estar diante de uma pura ficção. Contrariamente a *Falta* ou a *4.48 Psicose*, os seus últimos escritos em que a ficção só se sustenta na palavra, *Purificados* conserva ainda uma estrutura teatral. Todavia, apesar das aparências, acabamos por perceber que a ficção é, no fundo, pouco precisamente desenhada, e qualquer pessoa pode ser Graham ou Grace. Sarah Kane deixa espaço aos actores. Ao investirem as suas personagens, eles podem e devem preenchê-las com a sua própria vida. Devem transferir-se a si próprios, os seus problemas, as suas angústias para os papéis a interpretar. Isso não é possível sem uma ligação profunda com a vida íntima. Foi isso que assistiu alguns actores: a actriz que interpreta a personagem da mulher do *peep-show* quase desistiu, aquela que interpreta a personagem de Grace vai muito longe na relação de iniquidade, dominada pelo medo, que a liga ao seu próprio corpo. Há um eco entre elas e as palavras de Sarah Kane.

Sarah Kane expõe problemas que tocam a identidade de muito perto. Fala de homossexualidade, de incesto, de sexualidade mal definida. Não se sai intacto das palavras dela. Tem um efeito contagioso e arrastam para longe aqueles que as manipulam. Interpretar as peças da sua autoria contentando-se com um jogo de marionetas é aberrante. É preciso entregar-se com toda a sinceridade e honestidade que ela demonstrou ao escrevê-las, de outro modo não vale a pena representá-las. Sarah Kane não é convencional. O saber fazer ou a técnica não bastam. É preciso ser verdadeiro e ser capaz do mesmo abandono de si que ela manifesta ao contar directamente coisas muito pessoais. Então a falar dos actores, mas também de mim, encenador. Damos a ver de nós uma parte muito íntima.

Estava apreensivo com a ideia de representar este texto de Sarah Kane, aqui, na Polónia?

Várias vezes adiei este projecto em torno do qual trabalho, no entanto, há já três anos. Prefiro fazer *Hamlet* antes. Quando escolhi montar a peça *Purificados*, lutei e até quase me revolttei contra ela. Não a compreendi, embora ela criasse imagens em mim. Esta encenação suscitou uma grande polémica na Polónia, dentro dos círculos intelectuais. Dizia-se que Sarah Kane é uma autora que "vem do overdose", cuja escrita decorre do excesso, do excesso de álcool, do excesso de droga, etc. Alguns críticos pensavam que os textos dela eram próprios de uma inglesa "intoxicada", que captava imagens em estado de ingenuidade e incompreensível delírio. As pessoas sentiam-se agredidas por ela e eu quis perceber porquê, onde residia ao certo a agressão. Se tivesse ficado ao nível das imagens que há três anos

percepcionava, não teria sido suficiente, muito embora seja exequível dado que a escrita de Kane abre possibilidades de encenação. Para um encenador, é uma grande tentação entrar por essas aberturas. Mas, em cena, lidamos com o que é vivo. Os actores exprimem algo que vem forçosamente de algures. *Purificados* instaura um universo que reúne várias pessoas, esse universo é metafórico e é preciso encontrar um sentido para o teatro, senão os actores não conseguem representá-lo.

Na sua encenação, a ideia de castigo, de redenção e de purificação é muito nítida. Foi um *parti-pris* seu?

A noção do mal está fortemente presente em *Purificados*. Acho que se pode encontrar uma explicação para esta presença no quadro de uma reflexão moral. Na peça, a língua, as mãos, e depois os pés de Carl são cortados por Tinker. Ora, cortam-se as mãos a quem rouba, corta-se a língua a quem mente; e é o mesmo homem, Tinker, que dá a vida (permite a Grace mudar de sexo e tornar-se Graham) ou inflige a punição. Há, pois, efectivamente, uma dimensão de redenção, de castigo, de ressurreição. Coisa que é muito religiosa e também muito polaca. É preciso não esquecer que Sarah Kane era fervorosamente cristã até aos dezoito anos.

Isso explica a sua opção por essa perspectiva?

Aqui na Polónia, não se pode fazer Sarah Kane à maneira dos alemães, que a encenam com brutalidade, para fazer tremer a sociedade alemã. A meu ver, o objectivo desta autora não é mostrar a brutalidade de um universo, como as encenações alemãs podem dar a entender. Não se trata de um filme de terror, do género *O Silêncio dos Inocentes*, o Tinker não é um *serial killer*. Por toda a parte na Polónia se fala de Sarah Kane desde esta encenação. O espectáculo foi um choque para toda a gente, contrariamente, aliás, ao que eu pensava. De repente, tornou-se o tema teatral mais discutido neste país, desde há anos e anos a esta parte. Porque ecoa algo que está no ar do tempo. Desde as mudanças políticas ocorridas no país, as pessoas debatem-se num contexto moral, cada vez que, por exemplo, reflectem acerca do passado sem mentirem a si mesmas, sobre o papel da Polónia durante a Segunda Guerra Mundial. A nossa liberdade condena-nos a essas questões de responsabilidade. Somos vítimas ou carrascos na Europa? Ora, na peça, a ideia moral é muito forte e é a esse nível que o choque entre o espectáculo e o seu público acontece. De um modo mais geral, creio que a peça de Sarah Kane pertence ao lugar onde é levada à cena. A estrutura que nos oferece é tão aberta que é preciso preenche-la com a matéria francesa, alemã ou polaca, consoante o local onde for encenada. Encerra um imaginário universal, como aconteceu com os imaginários de Koltès, de Shakespeare ou dos antigos Gregos. Há mil maneiras de a abordar. Isso é muito moderno porque não limita, abre. É preciso, depois, encontrar a porta.

Sabia, antes de montar a peça, que o espectáculo ia enveredar por esta orientação "moral"?

Tive esse pressentimento, essa intuição. O espectáculo fala a toda a gente porque toda a gente se sabe condenada e Sarah Kane mostra a todos que há pior. O tratamento das cenas violentas (nomeadamente as amputações) nasceu no palco. Garo que era preciso encontrar a solução e escavar o sentido dessa violência, para que a representação não se reduzisse ao choque infligido ao espectador. Mas *Purificados* não é um texto em que uma pessoa se possa preparar de antemão para tudo quanto ele a vai fazer viver. Pessoalmente, perturba-me muito.



No fim, tornou-se uma questão pessoal. Tinha de me identificar com Sarah Kane, de saber o que ela dizia, porquê. De algum modo, interiorizei Sarah Kane. A violência dela tornou-se a minha violência. Uma violência interior que não nasce na rua, uma violência que vem do medo da vida.

Quando fala de Tinker, fica-se com a impressão de que essa

personagem é o equivalente de Deus... O medo de Tinker leva-o a fazer o que faz. Mas não deixa de ser humano, é um de nós. É uma vítima, está perdido. Pode ser Deus, cada um vê nele o que quiser. Tinker busca histericamente o sentido da vida. É como uma criança que deseja que o seu branco seja branco e o seu negro seja negro.

Não faz juízos morais sobre as acções das personagens?

Não há bonzinho nem vilão, nem nenhum juízo a fazer. Gostava de abrir um caminho interior em cada um de nós e que só a nós próprios conduzisse, à nossa sexualidade, ao nosso medo da vida e ao desejo de nos encontrarmos com a nossa segunda metade, conforme a ideia platónica de que cada um tem uma criatura que lhe é semelhante. Trata-se de uma problemática muito homossexual. A dimensão homossexual é um acrescento meu, vem do meu imaginário. Mas não é redutor, é uma ideia por acréscimo. Aliás, a experiência homossexual é vivida mais livremente hoje em dia, e enriquece o homem. \*

\* Excerto de "Il y a peu de beauté, nous parlons avec des condors". OutreSéine: la revue du Théâtre National de Strasbourg, N.º 1 (Fév. 2003), p. 45-49. Trad. Regina Guimarães.



**TEATRO FERNÁN GÓMEZ**  
CENTRO DE ARTE

Leonor Manso

# 4.48 psicosis

de Sarah Kane

Traducción Rafael Spregelburd

Dirección Luciano Cáceres

Producción Nestor Saied

**DEL 14 AL 22 DE FEBRERO**

SALA II



Plaza de Colón, 4



**Ficha Artística** 4.48 PSICOSIS de Sarah Kane

INTERPRETACIÓN	LEONOR MANSO
TRADUCCIÓN	RAFAEL SPREGELBURD
ILUMINACIÓN	ELI SIRLIN
DISEÑO ESCENOGRAFÍA	AGUSTIN GARBELLOTO
DISEÑO SONIDO	GABRIEL BARREDO
OPERACIÓN DE LUCES	FERNANDO BERRETA
OPERACIÓN DE SONIDO	ELEONORA PEREYRA
DIRECCIÓN	LUCIANO CACERES
PRODUCCIÓN GENERAL	NESTOR SAIED

**La crítica ha dicho**

*... Una experiencia inolvidable*

Ernesto Schoo – LA NACIÓN - 13/04/06

*Viaje iniciático por la conciencia. 4.48 Psicosis de Sarah Kane, tiene una Leonor Manso en un espectáculo admirable.*  
Juan Carlos Fontana – LA PRENSA – 26/04/06

*La mujer que sufre entre las sombras. Leonor Manso se luce en esta puesta de Luciano Cáceres, un monólogo despojado.*  
Hilda Cabrera – PÁGINA 12 - 02/05/06

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Descuentos especiales 914800308





## **Encuentro con Leonor Manso**

**Martes 17 de febrero de 2009 a las 19:00 horas. SALA II**

### **Sarah Kane - La palabra encarnada**

Dos encuentros de 50 minutos cada uno.

**Martes 17 de febrero de 2009: Encuentro II:**

a- La transmutación del texto en teatro.

b- Experimentación con los concurrentes con la palabra encarnada.

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## XXVI DEL 4 AL 29 DE NOVIEMBRE DE 2009 FESTIVAL DE OTOÑO

de la Comunidad de Madrid / [www.madrid.org/fo](http://www.madrid.org/fo)



### Jugoslovensko Dramsko Pozorište

*Fedrina ljubav*  
(El amor de Fedra),  
de Sarah Kane

Teatro

Teatro Fernán Gómez. Centro de Arte  
27 y 28 de noviembre - 20.30 horas  
29 de noviembre - 19.00 horas



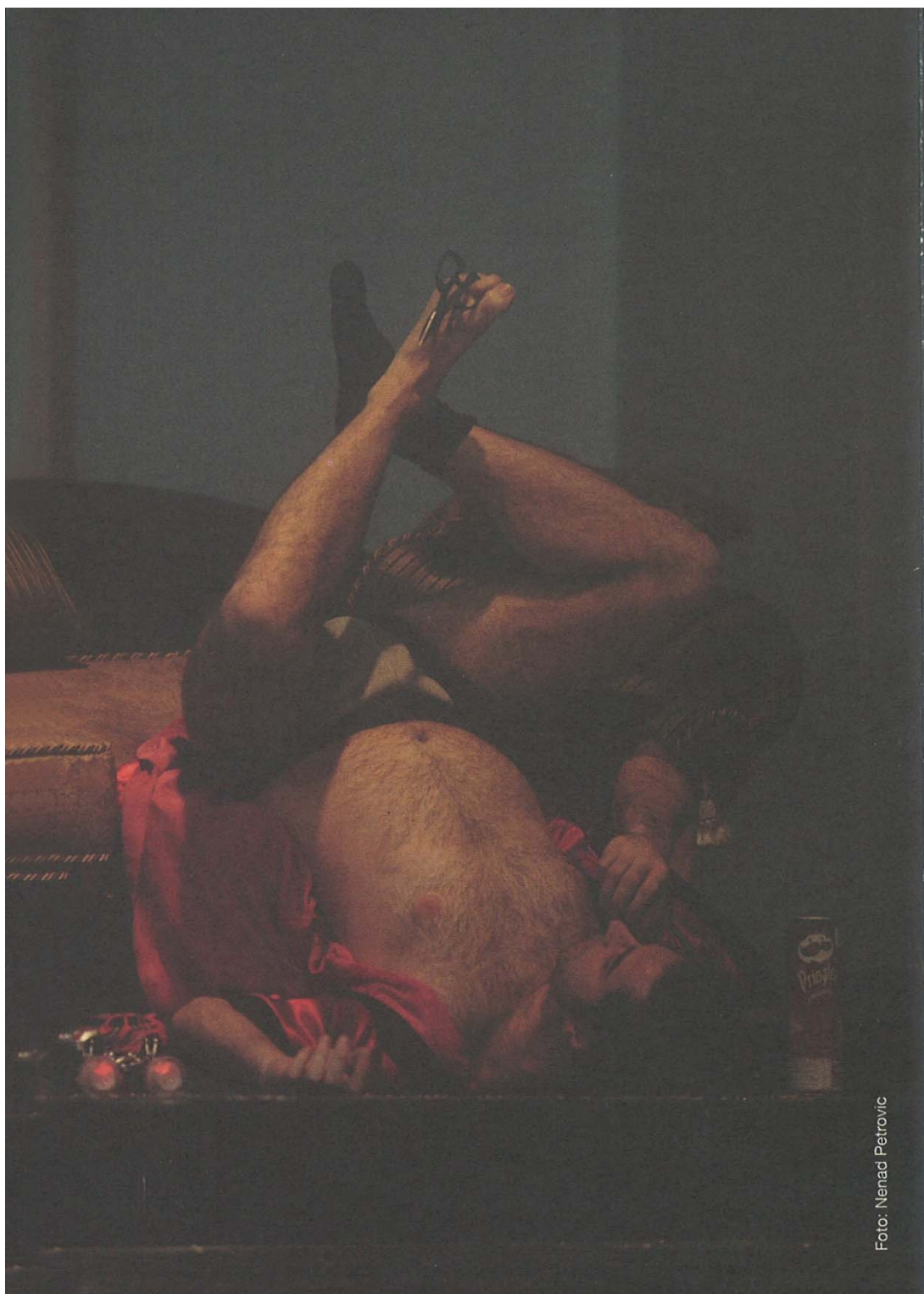


Foto: Nenad Petrovic



#### Estreno en España

País: Serbia  
Idioma: serbio (con subtítulos en español)  
Duración aproximada: 1 hora y 30 minutos (sin intermedio)

Traducción: Olivera Milenković

Dirección: Iva Milošević

Asistente de dirección: Jana Pranić

Interpretación:

Fedra: Mirjana Karanović

Hipólito: Ermin Bravo

Estrofar: Angelika Simić

Tesoro: Stobodan Bistić

Médico: Goran Jevitić

Cura: Bojan Lazarević

Escenografía: Goran Stojanović

Vestuario: Maja Mitrović

Compositor: Vladimir Peković

Preparación vocal: Lijana Mikić Popović

Arreglos: Zoran Ilić

Diseño de sonidos: Dusan Radovanović

Diseño de iluminación: Svetislav Galić

Ayudantes: Nina Odabović

Regiduría: Dusan Milosavljević

Traducción de subtítulos: Lúcia Gimeno Soro

Sobretitulado: Savinen

Encuentro con Iva Milošević y el equipo artístico de *Fedra* (El amor de Fedra)

Teatro Fernán Gómez, Centro de Arte, 28 de noviembre después de la función.

#### Con nombre propio

Creo que tanto Mark Ravenhill como Sarah Kane creían que la auténtica emoción se ha convertido en algo extremadamente exclusivo y que lo obscuro no proviene de la escatificación del sexo sino más bien de una incomodidad causada por tener que enfrentar el sufrimiento y la soledad de los otros. Esto es lo que es obscuro, esto es lo que nos hace sentir incómodos, tanto Ravenhill como Kane plantean la pregunta de qué es lo que hacemos en esos momentos, cómo reaccionamos. Los dos están de acuerdo en que intentamos enmascarar esa ruptura, que es la mayor parte de las veces violenta emocional y físicamente y eso es terrible.

Sarah Kane supone la aportación teatral al panorama de las artes visuales de los noventa (es famosa la exposición de Saatchi de trabajos de jóvenes artistas británicos, aquella en la que participó Damien Hirst con instalaciones de cuerpos de animales muertos sumergidos en alcohol ácido). Sarah Kane da una respuesta teatral al intento de las artes de poner bajo el microscopio el sufrimiento, nuestras reacciones ante el sufrimiento, nuestra tolerancia ante el sufrimiento. Donde están los límites de nuestra tolerancia al sufrimiento, cuánto se mueven esos límites y hacia dónde. Y todo esto, en una sociedad de consumo que fomenta el culto a la juventud, el culto a la salud y el culto a la felicidad.

Iva Milošević

#### En el escenario Jugoslovensko Dramsko Pozorište

El Jugoslovensko Dramsko Pozorište (JDP) se fundó en 1947 cuando, tras la Segunda Guerra Mundial, las nuevas autoridades decidieron crear una compañía integrada por los actores más prominentes de los colectivos teatrales y culturales de la antigua Yugoslavia. El Teatro de Arte de Moscú fue el modelo elegido para seguir sus pasos en política artística. Bojan Stupica, su primer director artístico, orientó el JDP hacia trabajos del más alto nivel literario, característica que se mantiene como rasgo distintivo de la compañía en la actualidad. A lo largo de las décadas siguientes, las nuevas tendencias se convierten en protagonistas de la compañía y reputados directores de otros países son invitados a presentar sus piezas.

Esta corriente de modernización se afirma con la llegada, en los años ochenta, del director artístico Jovan Ćirilov. En 1987 un incendio provoca el cierre de la antigua sede. Su reapertura en un nuevo edificio tiene lugar en el año 2003. En el JDP se han representado obras de autores como Biljana Svojilović, Milena Marković y Urošević Sajinac, pero también de clásicos como Molière, Andreiev, Voltaire y Musil, entre otros. El Jugoslovensko Dramsko Pozorište ha participado en los más importantes festivales del mundo y es miembro de NETA (New European Theatre Action), de ETC (European Theatre Convention) y de UTE (Union des Théâtres de l'Europe).

#### Iva Milošević, directora

Iva Milošević se graduó en el Departamento de Teatro y Radio de la Facultad de Artes Escénicas de Belgrado. Ha dirigido *Magic Afternoon*, de Wolfgang Bauer (Blief Theatre); *Shopping and Fucking*, de Mark Ravenhill (JDP Bojan Stupica Stage); *Kasimir and Karoline*, de Odo von Horváth (National Theatre Sombor); *East, de Neil LaBute* (JDP Bojan Stupica Stage); *Road to Nirvana*, de Arthur Kopit (Atelje 212); *La Sirenia*, de H.C. Andersen (Pequeño teatro Duško Radović); *Snake Pit*, de Vassily Sigarav (Atelje 212); *El lobo y los siete cabrillitos*, de los Hermanos Grimm (Teatro Pinokio) y *Fasten* (Celebración), de Thomas Vinterberg y Mogens Rukov.

#### Mirjana Karanović, actriz

Lleva sobre los escenarios desde los quince años. Se licenció en Interpretación en la Facultad de Arte Dramático de Belgrado y fue miembro del Jugoslovensko Dramsko Pozorište desde el año 1988 hasta el 2001. Su debut en el cine tuvo lugar en 1980 con el filme *Petrilj venac* (*La corona de Petrilj*), en el que interpretaba a una serbia analfabeta que le valió numerosos elogios. La fama internacional le llegó en 1985 con la película *Papa está en viaje* de negocios, de Emir Kusturika (Premio FIPRESCI -Fédération Internationale de la Presse Cinématographique- en Cannes y nominada a los Oscar como Mejor Película de Habla no Inglesa).

También ha interpretado papeles en otras películas de Kusturika (*Underground*, Palma de Oro en el Festival de Cannes y *La vida es un milagro*, Premio Cesar 2004)

y de directores como Goran Paskaljević (*The Powder Keg*), Vinko Bresan (*Festivos*, premiada en el Festival de Berlín en el Festival de Cine de Jerusalén y en el Festival de Cine Internacional Karlovy Vary), Jasmina Zbanic (*Grbavica*, ganadora del Oso de Oro en el Festival de Cine de Berlín), Andrea Staka (*Das Fräulein*, ganadora del Festival del Film de Locarno), Darko Lungulov (*Here and There*, ganadora del Tribeca Film Festival). Ha interpretado más de setenta papeles en teatro.

#### Ermin Bravo, actor

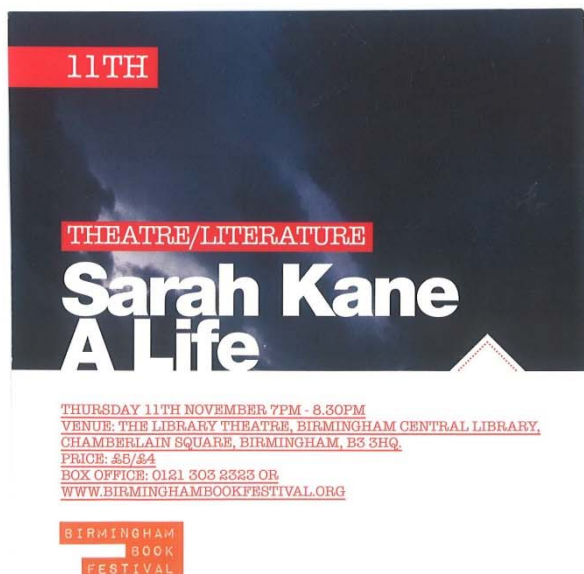
Nació en Sarajevo en 1979. En teatro ha interpretado piezas de Albert Camus, Richard Kallinoski, Sarah Kane, Eugene O'Neill, Zalka, Koltes, Glowacki, Basović, Shakespeare, Topić, Bojce, Harrower y Velicković. En cine ha trabajado en las películas *Memory Full* (2009) y *Grbavica* (2005) (Oso de Oro en el Festival de Cine de Berlín, Premio a la Mejor Película en el Festival de Cine de Reykjavik, Premio del Público en el Portland International Film Festival, entre otros muchos galardones), ambas con dirección de Jasmina Zbanic y *Remake* (2002), con dirección de Dino Mustafić.

Entre las distinciones que se le han concedido encontramos el Premio al Mejor Actor del Festival de Teatro de Jajce y del Festival Internacional de Actores Nikšić, Premio Tmaka al Mejor Actor en Bosnia y Herzegovina, Mejor Actor en el Festival de Teatro de Bosnia y Herzegovina, Laurel de Oro al Mejor Actor en el Festival Internacional de Teatro Mess, Mejor Actor en el Wine Country Film Festival de San Francisco, entre otros muchos. Ermin Bravo es profesor en la Academia de Artes Escénicas de Sarajevo.

Más en [www.jdp.rs](http://www.jdp.rs)

#### LA CRÍTICA *Politika*, Ana Tasić, 26/02/08

*El amor de Fedra* (1998), dramáticamente la más tradicional y consistente de todas las obras de Sarah Kane, está orientada como revisión de la interpretación de Séneca del mito griego. Kane establece la acción en un contexto contemporáneo, aludiendo explícitamente a temas como el incesto y decadencia en la estabilidad de las relaciones familiares, la hipocresía de las instituciones religiosas, el sentimiento general de pérdida de los individuos, así como la desaparición del amor, reemplazado por las relaciones sexuales y vacío de significado (...). Un interesante tipo de teatralización de la violencia, en una obra que anima al análisis de la causa a través de sus consecuencias, retratando implícitamente la pérdida de identidad en el marco de un peligrosamente hinchado poder político.







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# **SARAH KANE FESTIVAL**

**UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN**

**26-31 MARCH 2012**

**[www.lincoln.ac.uk/conferences](http://www.lincoln.ac.uk/conferences)**



**Lincoln  
Performing  
Arts Centre**



**UNIVERSITY OF  
LINCOLN**



# SARAH KANE FESTIVAL 26 - 31 MARCH 2012 AGE: 14+

Sarah Kane's dynamic, divergent plays continue to inspire dramatists, actors and directors all over the world. The projects showcased as part of our Sarah Kane Festival are a balance of finished productions of Kane's plays, works-in-progress and performative responses.

## FESTIVAL WARM UP

**FRIDAY 23**

**IN CONVERSATION WITH...**

**MAX STAFFORD CLARK**

**TICKETS: £8/£6 CONCESSIONS (£5 UNDER 26 & STUDENTS)**

**TIME: 6.30PM**

An overview of new writing from the mid 80s, into the nifty 90s which celebrated the new brutalists, through to the naughties and into the now...



Max Stafford Clark was the longest serving director of the Royal Court where, along with his companies Joint Stock and Out of Joint, he has helped shape the culture of new writing in this country. He looks back over some of his landmark productions including Caryl Churchill's Top Girls, Timberlake-Wertenbaker's Our Country's Good, and Mark Ravenhill's Shopping and F\*\*\*ing.

Duration: 1hr 30mins

**MONDAY 26**

**BLASTED**

**LEE ANDERSON**

**TICKETS: FREE ENTRY**

**TIME: 7.30PM**

Sarah Kane's visceral and affecting drama is brought to life in Build A Rocket's inaugural production. Ian and Cate's tumultuous relationship is smashed by an altogether more catastrophic event. With the suburban reality of their lives stripped violently from them, Ian and Cate are forced to confront the unspeakable brutalities that lie beyond the hotel bedroom walls.



**TUESDAY 27**

**GRAVE**

**NORTH KESTIVEN SCHOOL**

**TICKETS: FREE ENTRY**

**TIME: 6.00PM**

The North Kesteven Performing Arts Students have been working towards an innovative adaptation of Kane's Grave. The play has been split into two acts, and is performed by two different groups, therefore, giving two different interpretations of stages of the play. We have done this to demonstrate the variety available in Sarah Kane's work. The groups have attempted to create a full story within their Act in order to fully engage with the characters throughout their journey.



## LINCOLN SCHOOL OF PERFORMING ARTS DOUBLE BILL

**TICKETS: FREE ENTRY**



**Lincoln  
School of  
Performing Arts**

**INSIDE OUT**

**CHOREOGRAPHED BY ADRIENNE HERT**

**TIME: 7.00PM**

Based on Sarah Kane's work 'Cleansed', this dance performance focuses on the human desire (and struggle) to be accepted, loved and noticed. The dance makes reference to Kane's expressionist theatre with bold gestural phrases to develop a highly articulate yet accessible dance vocabulary.

**IF THERE COULD HAVE BEEN MORE MOMENTS LIKE THIS**

**LINCOLN SCHOOL OF PERFORMING ARTS**

**TIME: 8.00PM**

Sarah Kane's Phaedra's Love, reworked and entwined with other versions of the Phaedra story. A story told in many different ways on the European Stage, students from the Lincoln School of Performing Arts will explore this myth through Kane's text Racine's 17th Century version as an Opera and a Ballet...



**WEDNESDAY 28.**  
**THE DARK LIGHT OF SARAH KANE**  
**JOLENE & ALEXANDRA**

**TICKETS: FREE ENTRY**  
**TIME: 6.30PM & 8.00PM**

Inspired by Sarah Kane's last work, Let's go deep into her world, take a leap and be immersed. Emerge in a world of light and shadow. The insane mind has no limits. Look into the dark and endeavour to understand how someone is capable of destroying themselves.



**THURSDAY 29.**  
**PHAEDRA'S LOVE**  
**RUTH HENDERSON**

**TICKETS: FREE ENTRY**  
**TIME: 6.00PM & 7.00PM**

It is Prince Hippolytus' birthday. King Theseus is at war. Princess Strophe is running the country. Queen Phaedra is obsessed. Immersed in a family feud set to drive a country apart... If only there could have been more moments like this.



**THURSDAY 29 & FRIDAY 30**  
**NURSERY RHYMES**  
**MICHAEL O'HARE**

**Tickets: Free Entry**  
**Time: 8.00pm**

A thought provoking piece intending to shock and unsettle, presenting the darker side of human nature. A new-written play, inspired by the emotions evoked from the works of Sarah Kane, and her use of language and violence.



**FRIDAY 30**  
**SYNTHESIS: RECOGNITION**  
**DEvised BY DAN SHELTON IN COLLABORATION**  
**WITH STEVE HABEN, LISA CAWTHORNE**  
**AND PATRIZIA CARLOTA.**

**TICKETS: FREE ENTRY**  
**TIME: 6.00PM & 7.00PM**

A work-in-progress exploration of the deeper effects of the condition of modern life and the stigmata that is neurosis. A lurid and surreal experience utilising physical theatre, puppetry, film, and visceral soundscapes.



**SATURDAY 31**  
**ACTORS TOURING COMPANY**  
**IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE NORTH WALL**  
**TICKETS: £12/£10 CONCESSIONS (25 UNDER 26 & STUDENTS)**  
**TIME: 6.30PM**

A startling quartet of anger, desire, frustration and despair. Four performers embody the competing voices of a mind in torment and ecstasy. Sarah Kane's *Crave* is a contemporary classic, a ground-breaking work that challenges notions of what makes a play. Olivier award winning Actors Touring Company takes a fresh look at this landmark of modern international theatre.

# Crave

by Sarah Kane

Post Show Discussion. Duration: 55mins

# SARAH KANE NOW SYMPOSIUM PROGRAMME SATURDAY 31 MARCH, FULL DAY EVENT

9.00-9.50: COFFEE AND REGISTRATION

9.50: OPEN

## 10-11.45 PANEL 1 - PHILOSOPHY AND POLITICS

Joseph Dunne (University of Lincoln), 'Navigating Kane's City: Speakers in Grave as Fragments of Memory'

Jarriel K. Looney (Royal Holloway, University of London), 'Life's Too Long: An Existential Analysis of Sarah Kane's Hippolytus in Phaedra's Love'

Nina Kane (University of Huddersfield), 'Gender, violence and the political significance of the perimeter fence in Sarah Kane's Cleanness'

Louise LePage (Royal Holloway, University of London), 'Moving Beyond the Binary: Sarah Kane's Post/Human Characters'

11.45-12.00 COFFEE BREAK

12.00-1.00 Keynote: Dr Graham Saunders (University of Reading), 'Sarah Kane: Cool Britannia's Reluctant Feminist'

1.00-2.00 LUNCH

## 2.00-3.45 PANEL 2 - PERFORMING KANE

Ana Tasic (University of Belgrade), 'Sarah Kane's Plays in the Context Of Popular Culture: Contemporary Political Meaning of Extreme Physicality On The Stage'

Alex Mangold (University of Wales, Aberystwyth), 'Sarah Kane and the Idea of the New Tragic'

Geoffrey Colman (Central School of Speech and Drama), 'Flash Flicker Slash Burn: Acting Sarah Kane'

3.00 - 4.00 TEA BREAK

## 4.00 - 5.00 PANEL 3 - BLASTED

Lucy Barnes (Brown University, USA), 'Sarah Kane and the Theatre of Possibility'

Christina Chatzivasileiou (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki), 'In- Yel[er]teroptas Face: Blasted Hotel'

5.15 CLOSE

6.30 PERFORMANCE OF CRAVE, LPAC

8.00 OPTIONAL MEAL

Build A Rocket Theatre Presents

Sarah Kane's

# Blasted

March 26<sup>th</sup> 7.30pm

Lincoln Performing Arts Centre

Nb. This play contains a 15 minute interval

## The Playwright

**Sarah Kane**

**1971 – 1999**

Born in Brentwood, Essex, Sarah Kane nurtured a passion for theatre from a very early age. Kane studied Drama at Bristol University, graduating in 1992, before enrolling on an MA in Playwriting at the University of Birmingham. Under the tutelage of playwright David Edgar, Kane honed her craft, and in 1995 her debut play *Blasted* received its premiere at the Royal Court Theatre, Upstairs. Following the controversy of *Blasted*, Kane wrote a further four full-length plays, including the experimental *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis*, and a television screenplay, *Skin*. Kane also worked as Literary Associate for the Bush Theatre and was former writer-in-residence for Paines Plough. Despite her talent and success, Kane battled with severe depression for most of her adult life. On the 20<sup>th</sup> February 1999, Kane ended her own life while undergoing treatment for her illness at Kings College Hospital.

## The Play

***Blasted***

Original Premiere: 12<sup>th</sup> January 1995, Royal Court Theatre Upstairs.

*"For utterly disgusted I was by a play which appears to know no bounds of decency..."* – Jack Tinker, **Daily Mail, 19<sup>th</sup> January 1995.**

When *Blasted* exploded onto the Royal Court stage in 1995, audiences responded with what Simon Stephens would later eloquently refer to as 'a giddy paroxysm of idiotic fury'. Critics and commentators strove to outdo each other in signalling their moral indignation for Kane's play. *Blasted*, with its scenes of violence, rape and cannibalism, struck a nerve with the theatre going populace, but it wasn't until much later that it began to receive the consideration it ultimately deserved. Now, over a decade since its premiere, including a major recent London revival, *Blasted* is widely considered to be a masterpiece. Set in a hotel bedroom in Leeds, *Blasted* draws us into the destructive world of Ian, a middle-aged tabloid journalist, and Cate, a twenty-something Londoner with learning difficulties. It paints a startling vision of the war-of-the-sexes, in which an isolated act of barbarism sows the seeds of a much greater, catastrophic event.

## Build a rocket theatre would like to thank

Laurence Anderson, Integrated Metal Solutions, Reading University Film & Theatre Department, University of Reading, Lib Taylor, Liz Silvester, Pamela Wiggin, Graham Saunders, Craig Morrow, Chris Bacon, Phil Gleason, Lincoln Performing Arts Centre, South Street Arts Centre, Wycliffe church, University of Lincoln & The Victoria and Albert Museum



### Build a Rocket Theatre-Cast & Crew

**Lee Anderson/Director** Lee graduated from Reading University with a 1st in English & Film and Theatre. Lee is an Associate of SQUINT, producing *Bluebird* (Cockpit, 2010) and Assistant Directing *Love Thy Neighbour* (2012). Lee works with the V&A on their British Theatre project, and is Assistant Directing *Broken News* for New Wimbledon Theatre.

**Matt Van Niftrik/Ian** having recently graduated from Reading University with a degree in Film & Theatre, Matt has been working steadily as an actor in a number of professional productions around England. Before coming to the UK, Matt was a television presenter in South Africa, presenting, directing, and editing inserts for a southern African satellite broadcaster. Matt plans to continue acting writing and directing.

**Ashley Davies/Cate** Ashley is a Film & Theatre graduate of the University of Reading. She has performed in over 30 productions with the FT&T Department, drama society and various amateur theatre companies in Berkshire. She will soon be teaching drama with local youth theatre company *Berzerk Productions*.

**Daniel Rands/Soldier** Dan is a second year Film & Theatre and Literature student at the University of Reading, and has been involved in many of the faculty's productions as well as the University's Drama society. He is a keen actor and has thoroughly enjoyed the challenge of portraying the soldier in *Blasted*.

**Rosie Nicholas/Producer** Rosie is a second year Politics student with a passion for theatre. She has produced Kafka's *The Trial*, as well as stage managing a professional production of *Earnest* at The Redgrave in Bristol. Rosie will be assistant producer for a professional production of *The Dolphin Crossing* in the summer with plans to pursue a career in this field.

**Emma Chapman/Assistant Director** Emma is soon to finish her degree in Film & Theatre at the University of Reading, and intends to pursue a career in the theatre. As a member of the National Youth Theatre and Artistic Director of *Bell Jar Productions*, Emma has performed in and directed a number of successful performances, and last year received a 5 star review at Edinburgh Fringe festival with Mark Ravenhill's *Pool (No Water)*.

**Katy Lister/Stage Manager** Katy is soon to graduate from the University of Reading as a student of Film and Theatre. Having previously worked in the role of stage manager as well as working in technical teams in theatre, she also has experience in film directing and producing. Katy hopes to continue her work in stage management in television production.

**Jack Wilson/Set & Visual Designer** Jack is a 3<sup>rd</sup> year Art student at Reading University. In 2011 Jack directed Kafka's *The Trial* with the university drama society, and has performed in many amateur productions. He also performed in *On the Verge* theatre company's *Manmade*, Edinburgh festival 2009. His artwork can be found at [www.lewdjaw.com](http://www.lewdjaw.com)

**Michael Demetriou/Sound Designer** Michael is a freelance filmmaker, musician and music producer. He has a BA in Film & Theatre at the University of Reading. For his Films- [www.vimeo.com/michaeldemetriou](http://www.vimeo.com/michaeldemetriou), and his music -[www.soundcloud.com/northlorna](http://www.soundcloud.com/northlorna)

**Daniel Whateley/Lighting Design** In his final year at The University of Reading Studying Film and Theatre, Dan is eager to continue with a career in the theatre. Dan has worked on a number of productions in varying roles, most recently directing and producing Anthony Minghella's *Cigarettes and Chocolate* at last year's Edinburgh Fringe festival and directing Jez Butterworth's *Parlour Song* as part of his own independent project for his degree.

**Elliot Hollings/Lighting Design** Soon to be Film & Theatre graduate at Reading University Elliott has been involved in many productions. Generally leading lighting design for different projects he has also directed, artistic designed and stage managed several shows over time and is very excited to be designing the lighting for this production of *Blasted*

**Hannah Baxendale/Sound Technician** With experience in directing, stage managing, youth theatre teaching and being behind the technical crew for a number of productions

Hannah has taken on the role of sound technician for the play. She is soon to be a Film and Theatre graduate at the University of Reading and hopes to further her career in production work.

**Charlotte Hobday/Makeup Design** Charlotte will soon graduate from her degree in Film and Theatre at Reading University. She has experience in doing make up for short films and plays as well as experience in directing, producing and crewing for film. She hopes to continue working in film production after leaving university.

CHLOE WREN

CREW

DIRECTORS—**EDDIE FISHER AND SIANA TAYLOR**

STAGE MANAGER—**ADAM EL-BIR**

ASSISSTANT STAGE MANAGER—**BRADEN GUY**

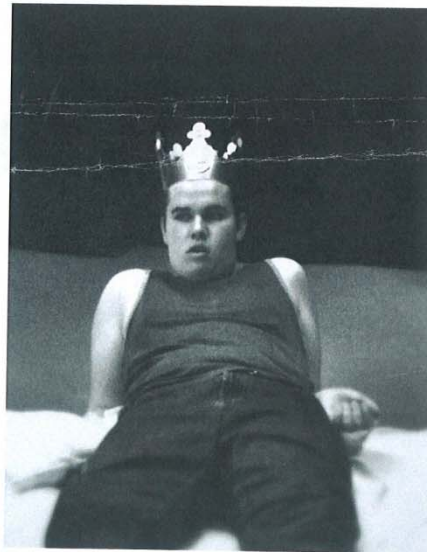
WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO **LISA GAUGHAN, KATE SICCHIO AND THE LPAC CREW**

TONIGHT'S PRODUCTION PRODUCES AN ALTERNATIVE LOOK AT KANE'S WORK ALONGSIDE DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF THE 'PHAEDRA' MYTH TOLD THROUGH FILM, MUSIC AND DANCE. THE DANCE PIECES ARE INSPIRED BY THE WORK OF MARTHA GRAHAM, WHO PRODUCED HER OWN VERSION OF PHAEDRA IN 1962. THE TEXT OF THE FILM SECTION IS TAKEN FROM SENECA'S VERSION OF THE TRAGEDY.

KANE'S *PHAEDRA'S LOVE* IS DEEMED HER ONLY COMEDY. *THE OBSERVER* STATED THAT THE PLAY WAS "PURE THEATRE. OR RATHER, IMPURE THEATRE: DIRTY, ALARMING, DARGEROUS".

THE PLAY WAS FIRST PERFORMED AT THE GATE THEATRE, LONDON IN 1996.

**TONIGHT'S PRODUCTION IS PRESENTED AS PART OF THE LPAC'S SARAH KANE FESTIVAL 2012.**



DIRECTOR'S NOTES

WE WOULD LIKE TO BEGIN BY SAYING THANK YOU TO EVERYONE FOR COMING TONIGHT. IT SEEMS LIKE NO TIME AT ALL WHEN SEVEN WEEKS AGO, WE HAD JUST CHOSEN OUR CAST AND BEGUN REHEARSALS. IT WAS TIME TO BEGIN THE IMPOSSIBLE....DIRECTING SARAH KANE! AS HER ONLY COMEDY, *PHAEDRA'S LOVE* INCORPORATES ALL OF KANE'S USUAL CHARM BUT MUCH FUNNIER! ALTHOUGH KANE IS THE BASIS FOR OUR PRODUCTION 'IF THERE COULD HAVE BEEN MORE MOMENTS LIKE THIS', WE HAVE JUDED SENECA'S TEXT, AND DANCE AND VIDEO THAT CELEBRATES SEVERAL VERSIONS OF THE PHAEDRA MYTH.

EDDIE FISHER & SIANA TAYLOR - DIRECTORS



LINCOLN SCHOOL OF PERFORMING ARTS  
PRESENTS

"IF THERE COULD HAVE BEEN MORE MOMENTS LIKE THIS"

TUESDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2012

CAST

HIPPOLYTUS—ADAM RUSH

PHAEDRA—BETHAN WILLIAMS

STROPHE—GINA RADFORD

PRIEST—CHRIS MUDD

THESEUS—ALEX WATSON

COMPANY—TOM BAINES; BRADEN GUY; GREG SELLERS; SORCHA RATTIGAN; CARMEN TYLER; KIRSTY  
TAYLOR

FILM CAST

HIPPOLYTUS—GEORGE CREIGHTON

PHAEDRA—JASMINE HALL

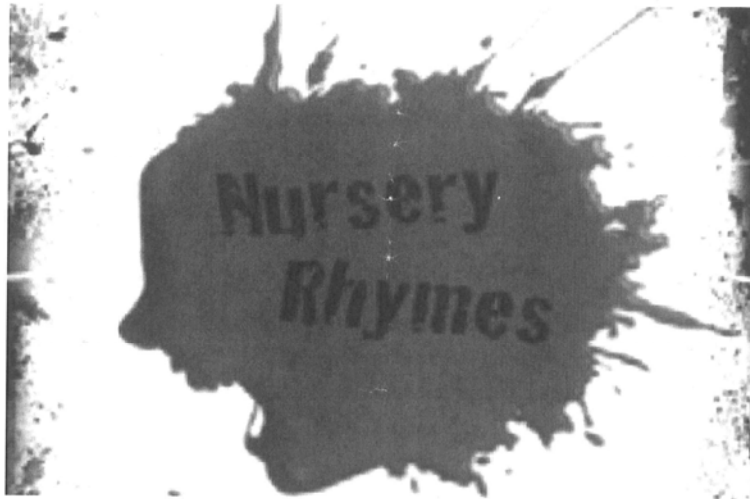
DANCE CAST

EMMA BOUCH

CHARLOTTE DOWNING

SARAH SHARMAN

CHLOE WREN



Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2012

And

Friday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2012

CAST

THOMAS- DANIEL WILLCOCKS

CLAIRE- BETH SUTCH

ELIZABETH-LUCIA SERPINI

WRITER & DIRECTOR

MICHAEL O'HARE



TECH CREW

CARL BLADES

ED CARFRAE

WILL SMITH

FERENC IGALI

**NURSERY RHYMES**

A thought provoking piece intending to shock and unsettle, presenting the darker side of human nature. A new written play, inspired by the emotions evoked from the works of Sarah Kane, and her use of language and violence.

**DIRECTORS NOTES**

Firstly, I would like to say thank you to all the technical crew and front of house staff. Without them tonight would be a shambles. I would also like to thank the cast because without them this show wouldn't happen. Each cast member has worked so hard on this play and words alone cannot express how pleased I am with them.

Sarah Kane's work has always fascinated me. The language the physicality and the emotions evoked in the audience and actor is something I love. So when I was given the opportunity to put my play on in the SARAH KANE FESTIVAL I was chuffed to bits. I've really enjoyed doing this play and hope you enjoy it as much as I have enjoyed putting it on. Thanks for coming, hope you enjoy the performance!

Michael O'Hare



**Actors Touring Company**

in association with The North Wall presents

# *Crave*

*by Sarah Kane*

*A startling quartet of anger, desire, frustration and despair.*

Sarah Kane's *Crave* is a contemporary classic, a ground-breaking work that challenges notions of what makes a play. Four performers embody the competing voices of a mind in torment and ecstasy.

**Actors Touring Company** takes a fresh look at this landmark of modern international theatre in a major new production for the twenty-first century.

Olivier award winning Actors Touring Company's recent productions include *The Golden Dragon*, *Ivan and the Dogs*, *Eurydice* and *The Brothers Size*.



**Tour dates spring 2012**

- 29–30 March **North Wall Arts Centre**  
01865 319 450 [www.thenorthwall.org](http://www.thenorthwall.org)
- 31 March **Lincoln Performing Arts Centre**  
0844 888 4414 [www.lpac.co.uk](http://www.lpac.co.uk)
- 3–5 April **Northern Stage**  
0191 230 5151 [www.northernstage.co.uk](http://www.northernstage.co.uk)
- 19–21 April **Manchester Royal Exchange Studio**  
0161 833 9833 [www.royalexchange.co.uk](http://www.royalexchange.co.uk)



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# bodies on stage



[www.rub.de/bodies](http://www.rub.de/bodies)

21st Annual Conference of the German  
Society for Contemporary Theatre and  
Drama in English (CDE)

7 – 10 June 2012

Organiser: Anette Pankratz

Englisches Seminar

Ruhr-Universität Bochum

Conference Venue: Katholische Akademie

Die Wolfsburg

Mülheim/Ruhr



Thursday, 7 June 2012		13.30-15.00	Panel 2: Body Politics	Michael Lachman, "Absent Bodies: Ravenhill's Phenomenology of Carnality"	
10.00-15.30	CDE Postgraduate Forum	13.30-15.00	Christopher Innes, "Triumphant Physical Theatre: Undermining Ethics through the Body"	14.00-15.00	Coffee & Cake
13.00-19.00	Registration			15.00-17.30	Workshop: Rona Munro, "Acting Bodies on Stage"
15.30-17.30	CDE Steering Committee Meeting			17.45-18.45	Dinner
18.00-19.00	Dinner			19.30	Michael Yates Crowley, <i>Righteous Money! Gerechtes Geld</i> Productions by Wolf 359, New York and Schlosstheater Moers
19.00-19.20	Conference Opening				
19.30-20.30	Keynote 1: Edward Bond, "The Third Crisis: The Possibility of Drama in the Future"				
21.00	Conference Warming	15.00-15.30	Coffee and Cake		
		15.30-18.00	CDE Annual General Meeting		
		18.00-19.00	Dinner		
Friday, 8 June 2012		Saturday, 9 June 2012		9.00-10.00	Keynote 4: Michael Raab, "Acting in Contemporary British and Irish Plays in the Original and in Translation"
9.00-10.30	Panel 1: Object as/versus Bodies	9.00-10.00	Keynote 3: Doris Kolesch, "Staging Voices"	10.00-10.30	Coffee Break
	Kate Kafiasz, "Staging Reality (Beyond Representation): A Perplexing Bondian Body"	10.00-11.30	Panel 3: Performance(s)	10.30-12.00	Panel 5: Oscillating Bodies
	Nils Wilkinson, "Programmable Bodies: Active Capacity and Passive Disposition in Ayckbourn's Robots and Churchill's Clones"		Daniel Schulze, "Blood, Guts and Suffering: The Body as Communicative Agent in Wrestling and Performance Art"		Sarah Ablett, "The Body and the Bible in Sarah Kane's <i>Blasted</i> "
	Beatrix Hesse, "Dead Bodies on Stage"		Jan Suk, "Bodies? On? Stage? Human Play of Forced Entertainment"		Sarah-Anna Wetzlmayr, "Ex-centring the Subject and De-centring the Original: Mark Ravenhill's <i>pool (no water)</i> in the Context of <i>Aktionismus</i> "
10.30-11.00	Coffee Break		Rainer Emig, "Staging the Phallus: <i>Naked Boys Singing</i> "		Elzbieta Baraniecka, "Words That Matter: Between Materiality and Immateriality in Sarah Kane's <i>4.48 Psychosis</i> "
11.00-12.00	Keynote 2: Deirdre Osborne, "Skin Deep, a Self-Revealing Act: Monodrama, Mixedness and (I)identity in SuAndi's <i>The Story of M and Mojisola</i> Adebayo's <i>Moj of the Atlantic</i> "	12.00-13.00	Lunch	12.00-13.00	Lunch
	Deirdre Osborne & SuAndi, Interview & Performance	13.00-14.00	Panel 4: (Post-)Corporeality	13.30	End of Conference
12.00-13.30	Lunch Break		Maria Elena Capitani, "Dealing with Bodies: The Corporeal Dimension in Sarah Kane's <i>Cleansed</i> and Martin Crimp's <i>The Country</i> "		

## Guest speakers

We are pleased to welcome distinguished international theatre practitioners and academics working on contemporary theatre in English as guest speakers to our conference in Hamburg.

### Mark Ravenhill

British playwright, actor and director

*The Permanent Present? Locating History on the Contemporary Stage*

### Una Chaudhuri

New York University

*Anthropo-Scenes:*

*Theatre and Climate Change*

### Amelia H. Kritzer

University of St. Thomas, Minnesota

*Women and Historical Agency in Contemporary British Plays*

### Helen Gilbert

University of London, Royal Holloway

*History is Broken Here: Indigenous Performance and the 'Cunning of Recognition'*

### Catherine Diamond

Kinnari Ecological Theatre Project  
Soochow University Taipei, Taiwan

*Eco-drama workshop*

**CDE** The German Society for  
Contemporary Theatre and Drama in English

23rd Annual Conference

# Theatre and History

Cultural Transformations

CRITICAL JUDGEMENTS

Conference Programme

Welcome to the  
23rd Annual Conference of the  
German Society for Contemporary  
Theatre and Drama in English

19 – 22 June 2014

At Elsa Brändström Haus  
Hamburg-Blankenese



Universität Hamburg  
DER FORSCHUNG | DER LEHRE | DER BILDUNG

The German Society for Contemporary Theatre and Drama in English welcomes you to its 23rd Annual Conference.

The conference aims to investigate the relations between theatre and history and to analyse different temporalities in performance in contemporary English-language drama and theatre across the world.

For more information visit

[www.cde-conference.de](http://www.cde-conference.de)

[uni-hamburg.de](http://uni-hamburg.de)

Questions?

Please contact [cde-conference@uni-hamburg.de](mailto:cde-conference@uni-hamburg.de)

The conference is kindly supported by

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